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William Phillips

ARTISTIC TRUTH AND THE WARPED VISION*

Almost from the beginning, our culture has had a double image of the creative man: he was believed to be obsessed, perhaps even mad, yet at the same time he was thought to have some extraordinary gift of insight, some great wisdom not shared by ordinary people. This apparent contradiction has never been resolved; sometimes it was the normality of the artist that was emphasized, while at other times his prophetic powers were stressed, though usually the question was solved by ignoring it. With the development of psychoanalysis, the problem has taken on a new cast. At first, it was simply assumed that art is in some manner connected with neurosis, though there was disagreement about whether art expresses neurosis or the catharsis of the neurosis. More recently, however, the trend has been mostly the other way, to dissociate the work of art from the neurosis of the author, and to regard it as a "normal" achievement, a triumph of health over sickness.

This more wholesome view of the creative process is often put forward in the language of psychoanalysis, but it also obviously reflects the need for personal tranquillity and social adjustment that dominates the mood of the present. For one thing, the discovery that neurosis is curable, putting it within the domain of health and hygiene, was bound to make creative aberration less palatable. Even more important, the association of psychological disorder with the estrangement of the modern artist—as in the cult of the unique, from Rimbaud to Dylan Thomas—has made it difficult to distinguish the neurotic from the anarchic personality. Though it is still not clear whether the bohemian dedication to depravity simply releases neurosis, or is tied up with it, we think of the two as belonging

* This essay will appear as the introduction to a forthcoming anthology, *Art and Psychoanalysis,* to be published this spring by Criterion Books.

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together. Hence our feelings about the relation of neurosis and creativity are likely to be colored by our views on the social position of the artist; and in a period of respectability and cultural timidity it is not surprising that abnormality and unconventionality are often confused, and both frowned upon.

When we speak of the artist as "mad" or "neurotic" the terms do not simply refer to the state of his mental health; they give a mythic picture of the creative man: inspired, rebellious, dedicated, obsessive, and alienated, as well as neurotic; and they also suggest the evil and irrational underworld of experience dredged up by the modern writer. Thomas Mann's celebration, for example, of the role of disease in the making of art stems from a sense of the moral and psychological ambiguities in any work of art as well as in the life of the artist, and from Mann's belief that the artist has been chosen to enrich the imagination of the community though he is in some ways outside its pale. On the other hand, many recent demands for normality have questioned the need for anything against the grain, irresponsible, or offbeat in art. The fact is that the work of writers like Gide or Joyce represents a different kind of experience from that of the common run of fiction; and it is this experience, rather than the neurosis of the author, that is rejected in the name of normality, which is taken to be synonymous with whatever is conventional and popular.

Perhaps it is because philistinism has been associated with health, in our culture, that many of us prefer to make some connection, however loose, between art and neurosis, though there is still very little evidence of a scientific nature to support such a view. It is true that most advanced art, at least in our time, seems to have thrived in an atmosphere of abnormality, and that the lives of most creative figures read like case histories. But, as Lionel Trilling has pointed out in a remarkably cogent essay ("Art and Neurosis," PR, 1945), there is no reason to believe that neurosis itself is the creative force. There is also the question of the work: is it neurotic or not?—and if not, what does it mean to say that the artist is a neurotic? Even if neurosis is shown to have something to do with art, we still have to ask whether all neuroses are related to all art or whether only some kinds of art are traceable to certain neuroses, and whether the neurosis of the artist produces, conditions,

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or is transmuted or sublimated into art. To put the question in a more general way, what we need to know is how the neurosis of the artist, which is a form of disorder, can shape a work of art that has value and meaning for an entire civilization. Thus we are really questioning what was once assumed: that madness and wisdom may go hand in hand.

One reason we know so little about the relation of neurosis to art is that we know so little about art. It might have been expected that psychoanalysis would clarify some of these questions; and actually it has thrown some light on one side of the problem, by defining the neurotic mechanism and by giving an exact account of the neurosis of many writers, painters, and musicians. But, despite the vast number of studies on the subject by psychoanalysts, we still have no answer to some of the basic questions. Much of the writing on art by psychoanalysts combines bad taste—as when *Death of a Salesman* is treated as a classic—with some contrived, jargonized theory. The approach to painting and music,[1] based largely on a "literary" version of content, has been most primitive, and its value has been biographical rather than aesthetic. But even the best of psychoanalytic writing in this vein suffers from the lack of an accepted philosophy of art; hence it has had either to adopt or improvise one. Some analysts have taken art to be a form of communication, others a mode of expression, and the traditional definitions of meaning, form, content, and audience have all found their way into psychoanalytic writing. Most aesthetic systems in the past have been no better than the insight that went into their formulation, and when they simply are tacked on to some doctrine in another field, like psychoanalysis, the result is at best a tour de force. Even so brilliant an essay as Ernest Jones's famous study of *Hamlet,* which traces the Oedipal motives in the play, makes the assumption that works of art are great and lasting when, like *Hamlet,* they deal with primal conflicts. Such an assumption is, of course, too simple and schematic, and though Jones's piece does

1 Most of the examples I am using here are drawn from literature, because the formal content of painting and music has a much more complex and less obvious connection with psychological motives, and these media require special analysis. I do believe, however, that all of the arts, and creative thinking as well, have the same basic relation to neurosis.

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enlarge our understanding of the play, it is not, in itself, a first-rate example of literary criticism or of aesthetics.

Freud's few attempts to explain the nature of art are not very impressive, though of course Freud himself—like most outstanding thinkers—was superior not only to his followers, but often to his own theories. Perhaps the least impressive of Freud's observations was that it was the desire for fame, power, and the love of women that lay behind the creative will of the writer. Nor do I find a satisfactory explanation of the creative act in the analogies to day-dreaming and fantasy-building noted by Freud. As for the *origin* of the creative gift, Freud insisted on many occasions that psychoanalysis had no special explanation for this mysterious force, though the concept of sublimation would suggest that all the achievements of civilization come from the taming of the id. Freud's contribution to the problem of art lies mainly, I think, in the examples he set in his profound essays on such figures as Dostoevsky and Leonardo, where he made a number of interesting correlations between the neurotic pattern of these artists' lives and the content of their works, touching on the meaning of those correlations in a purely speculative and tentative manner.

Any total approach to art that sees the creative gift or process as a form of neurosis is bound to produce a lopsided and absurd theory. If art is considered as a form of sublimation, or a variety of dream or fantasy, or even as a therapeutic activity, then we have no criteria for judging it, nor any way of distinguishing it from other kinds of dream or fantasy, or therapy. And as for the many ingenious exercises, revealing art to be oral or anal, sadistic or masochistic, narcissistic, totemic, the best that can be said of them is that they apply equally well to a doodle, a Grandma Moses, or a Jackson Pollock, though, of course, they cover more of the doodle. Nor can we attribute the power or significance of a work of art to the neurosis of the author, for then we would have to assume that its meaning lay wholly in its psychological content, which corresponded not only to the neuroses of the author, but to those of the audience as well. Such a novel as *The Possessed* would have to be read merely as a story of the criminal mind, and we could not account for its stature as a political novel.

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It seems meaningless to speak of *neurotic* art, except in referring to the exercises of mental patients, which might yield something neurotic—or psychotic[2]—but not art. On the other hand, it is equally meaningless to speak of a *healthy* art or of the creative act as a triumph of health over illness, since the term healthy can only be pejorative: it does not describe a specific form or content. If all we mean by a triumph of such health is that instead of collapsing a writer produced a poem or story, then this is only another way of saying that his neurosis did not completely paralyze him. To characterize, for example, Rilke's spurts of productivity, in between long fallow periods, as signs of health is simply to juggle the word so as to define writing as healthy. One might just as well call it neurotic, since the process of composition was obsessive and dreamlike. Certainly the creative act often resembles compulsive fits and states of hallucination, and all we gain by calling it healthy rather than neurotic is the reassurance of knowing that we are not reveling in disease.

In what sense, then, does neurosis have something to do with art? To begin with, there is the fact that many, if not most, writers, painters, and musicians in the modern period have been neurotic. It is true, of course, that people who are not creative may also be neurotic; hence the popular belief that the connection between art and neurosis has been much exaggerated. Perhaps the only way to settle this question in a seemingly scientific way would be to tabulate neuroses to determine whether creative people suffer more than others, and whether their neuroses are different in kind or degree. In a time when every conceivable question has become the subject of a poll, it is surprising that no statistical study of neurosis has ever been attempted. But even if such a study showed, as I suspect it would, that creative people are distinguished not by their neurosis but by their creations, it still might be true that neurosis, though not *sufficient* for the production of art, may be *necessary* for it. Recently a study of a German writer and thinker appeared under the title, *The Mind of a Genius*. Though it was obviously not its intent, what struck one most about the book was the fact that

2 I have been using mainly the more common and less extreme term "neurotic," but much of what I have been saying could apply to psychosis or psychotic tendencies.

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the subject's genius lay not in his achievement but in his personality and intellectual habits, which combined boldness and originality with eccentricity. Somewhere in his make-up was an essential flaw, perhaps in his intelligence, but he had what might be called a neurotic predisposition toward ideas.

Strictly speaking, a neurosis is an insoluble conflict within the unconscious that may lead to aberration in one's behavior or state of mind. In this technical sense, neurosis would be pertinent to art only if we thought of art itself as an aberration or sublimation. But using the term more loosely, in neurosis, as well as in psychosis, there is often a distortion of experience, so that certain human events and relations are given an undue—sometimes obsessive—emphasis. In someone who is not creative, a distorted view of reality is part of his illness and inability to adjust and may be of no intellectual interest: indeed, the paranoia of a trivial mind is incredibly boring. In someone like Kafka, however, the paranoid twist in both the life and the writing was coupled with a gift of a high order and a mind capable of original and striking observations. The same was true in D. H. Lawrence, whose sexual dreams would have had only a clinical interest without his intellectual powers.

Now much modern writing is centered in some obsessive theme or some biased image of human affairs, growing out of the fixations of the author. Take even so constructed a work as *The Waste Land*: its meanings would seem to be mainly cultural and religious; but what Eliot is concerned with, in our culture and religion as well as in our personal lives, is the breakdown of identity, and the image of breakdown is provided by the sexual ambiguity of Tiresias,[3] which I take to be the psychological core of the poem. The homosexual theme crops up constantly, usually in an explicit way, but I think it is also expressed symbolically in the perversion of feelings and the spiritual impotence running through *The Waste Land*. One would have to know more about Eliot's private preoccupations to speculate further about the effect of his neurosis on his entire vision, but I think it is reasonable to assume that this vision reflects the more personal elements in his writing.

3 Despite Eliot's own note on the importance of Tiresias in the scheme of *The Waste Land,* most commentators have not given him more weight than any other element in the poem, perhaps because their methods precluded a psychological approach.

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This is not to say that *The Waste Land* is a neurotic poem, any more than, say, *Gulliver's Travels* or even *The Trial* are neurotic works, though Swift and Kafka were known to be mentally disturbed to the point of partial breakdown and inability to function in crucial areas of their lives. What then does it mean to say that Swift's or Kafka's writings contained some central distortion of experience traceable to the neuroses of the authors? The answer, I think, is that their neurotic impressions of the world coincided with impressions that were not neurotic and served to organize and energize the latter. In the case of Kafka, the paranoia, for example, that colored his personal and sexual relations became in his fiction a kind of psychological focus for a world in which the characters are the victims of organized ignorance and authority; and the living Kafka's search for his psychic identity becomes in his writing a search for a religious and metaphysical identity. The work of neurotic writers can be characterized as neurotic only by reducing its total meaning to its seemingly neurotic components—which, in turn, are assumed to be identical with the neurosis of the author. Thus Kafka's novels can be considered neurotic only if we interpret them, as some analysts and critics actually have done, as fictionalized projections of Kafka's own derangements.

Now we come to another paradox: for the unique combination of neurotic experience with some apparently objective or plausible view of the world, such as we find in writers like Kafka or Eliot, seems to be characteristic of much modern literature. Indeed, it is this combination that we designate as the *modern experience,* and this experience, though seemingly shared by a sufficient number of readers and writers to make up a tradition, has at the same time certain affinities with neurotic experience. Such themes as loneliness, self-doubt, hypersensitivity, loss of identity, estrangement from the community—all have their counterparts among the common neuroses; and the two modes of experience, normal and abnormal, often have been joined in such a way that it becomes meaningless to distinguish between them. How can we set Swift's neurotic misanthropy apart from the powerful satire of his writings, which, ironically enough, are assigned to school children for didactic as well as literary reasons? If Gide's homosexuality was a "sickness," what

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shall we call the moral implications of his concern with the truth of one's own being? Is *Death in Venice* a study of degeneration or a parable of a modern writer? In each case I suppose we would have to say the content was both normal and abnormal, but that is the same as saying it is neither; or perhaps, to put it more precisely, there has been in each case a conjunction of neurotic experience with experience that we assume to be normal—by which we apparently mean an experience shared by a sufficient number of cultivated people to make it seem objective, general, and typical.

If some such combination of the objective and neurotic is characteristic of modern writing, we can only speculate about the way the two have been brought together. It has been suggested at various times, particularly when our political morale has been low, that our civilization is neurotic; this would, of course, make it unnecessary to explain any single neurotic strain in our art or culture. I suspect that describing an entire culture as neurotic is nothing more than a juggling of terms to make all art—what about our philosophy and our science?—neurotic by definition. If our civilization is neurotic, then everything and everyone is neurotic, and we have no way of judging it or knowing whether a re-creation of it is distorted or not. The collectivization of neurosis transforms the neurotic artist into a psychological conformist.

One simple explanation of the way neuroses legitimately find their way into any of the arts would be that the writer's world has been created mainly by his intelligence acting on what he has inherited from his culture, and that his neuroses are then brought into play as he personalizes his experience. Another might be that only writers endowed with certain kinds of neuroses, along with their imaginative gifts, can thrive, in the Darwinian sense, at any given time. Someone like Hemingway, who has put his adolescent ideas to literary use, might not have been so successful in a classical period that put a premium on intellectual order and maturity. Or, perhaps, a process of natural selection takes place even earlier, before creation begins, and only certain kinds of neurotics are able to make the break with the community necessary to enter the unstable world of the arts. Surely, there must be some significance in the large number of homosexuals peopling the intellectual and artistic professions, especially the dance and the theater, today. We know that the faculty

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we call talent is not sufficient to produce "art": thousands of people have enough verbal and narrative skill to write and even to find a market. Our idea of art embraces, in addition to control of the medium, a profound and arresting sense of the world, and it is conceivable that this power, though mainly intellectual, is enhanced by a disposition, which we would call neurotic, to reject conventional attitudes.

The question remains as to how a view of the world that has been warped, if only partially, by neurosis can be said to be truthful, objective, or morally stimulating. The question is bound up with many philosophical considerations, including the very nature of art and truth, that are themselves in dispute. But this much can be said: the idea that art is the dispenser of moral and philosophical truths is only a myth, though a prevailing one in our culture. Like most other myths, this one has great suggestive power, linking art to other pursuits that enlarge our vision and understanding, but it cannot be applied literally without falling into didacticism.

From the time of Plato and Aristotle there has been an almost constant pressure, from many different sources, to enlist the arts in the service of some higher aim or some larger truth. Rarely and only for short spells was it permissible for a novel, say, or a painting to steer clear of the claims of morality, politics, or religion; usually it was considered frivolous and irresponsible to think of the arts in their own terms. At first there was the messianism of Christianity, then the Protestant ethic, and more recently the growth of utilitarian ideals, the development of a social conscience, and the confusion of art with education in the spread of middle and high culture—all these forces have conspired to get us to believe that art is supposed to make us better and wiser. There may be some ambiguity about whether art is by nature concerned with truth and morality or whether that is its ideal purpose toward which it must strive at all times. In either case the effect is the same: art has become an easy prey in our culture to all kinds of theories and causes that claim to have discovered some medical, moral, or historical truth.

Now part of the difficulty obviously comes from the fact that none of the arts is self-contained. Despite the efforts of many for-

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malist critics to define a work of art as the sum of its textual or plastic qualities and to judge it mostly in technical terms, the fact is that art has always absorbed the moods and currents of the civilization that produced it. And though I do not want to go into aesthetics at this point, I think it can be said that we regard a work of art as good or bad because of the way its formal qualities are combined with what we roughly call its vision, or its values, or its range of consciousness. But this is not at all the same thing as saying that literature, to take the art most filled with *content,* has a moral purpose, a position which has been quite fashionable ever since the idea of political responsibility was abandoned; or that it reflects or asserts something known as "truth," a point of view that has lately been gaining ground. Of course the notion of truth is an old naturalist slogan, but all it meant in that context was to promote the kind of fiction that represented the texture of average, daily plebeian existence, and insofar as naturalism contained any idea of truth or reality, it was that life is grimy and frustrated and full of social injustice. This was simply a literary movement riding the tail of a social movement.

The more recent turn toward the concept of truth in art is something else; it is actually a turn against the idea of alienation, dissidence, and rebellion. For it ignores the question of values and tends to minimize the attitudes of commitment to new forces and rebellion against old ones that lie behind fresh creative movements and the audiences that support them. It seems meaningless to insist that a work of art conveys some lasting human truth: what is the "universal" truth in Joyce's *Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* or Picasso's *Three Musicians* or one of Schoenberg's compositions? (Incidentally, the word "truth" is often only a synonym for verisimilitude or for insight into human behavior.) Aside from the mastery of the medium, we have, in modern art at least, not a permanent truth but different accents or points of view that at best are true only for a small number of people and perhaps only for a limited span. In our time many innovations have been carried out by an avant-garde concerned not with the truth but with some new, irreverent, often shocking stand against prevailing moods and opinions. And perhaps the decline of the avant-garde has something to do with the high regard these days, not only for the notion of truth, but also for that of normality and respectability in the arts.

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Just as other periods sometimes regarded the imagination as a wild, demonic force, we now like to think of it as quite tame and orderly; and we tend to associate abnormality with literary postures and false ideas. But let us not be fooled into thinking these views are objective or that they help clarify the relations between art, truth, and morality. They are merely symptoms of the times; and their literary meaning lies mainly in the fact that they serve to promote one creative strain rather than another. Thus in recent years there has been a growing tendency to tear down the more obviously neurotic and alienated writers, the extremists, like Kafka, Proust, Joyce, even Dostoevsky, and to elevate such figures as Dickens, George Eliot, and Trollope, who seemingly stand for a more orderly and "wholesome" kind of experience. No doubt the tension between these two traditions has played a large part in the literary life of the past century, and we have tended to associate greater abnormality with those whom Van Wyck Brooks once called "coterie" writers, largely because they symbolized a more radical break with existing norms. As Gide, who favored the wilder talents, put it: "There do exist geniuses, Victor Hugo for example, sane and whole. Their perfect spiritual poise precludes the possibility of any fresh problem. Rousseau without the leaven of madness, would, I am sure, be no better than an undigested Cicero. . . . The individual who is abnormal refuses to submit to laws already established." At the same time, we should note that the cleavage is not absolute. Someone like Mann, for example, was torn between the two traditions; and it is amusing to watch the efforts today to transform Whitman into a man of the main stream.

If, however, we investigate the life and work of the individual writer, the distinction between the normal and the abnormal in literature turns out to be largely programmatic rather than scientific. Henry James or T. S. Eliot, for example, who are usually assumed to be on the side of order and classicism, may be just as neurotic—in their work as well as in their private lives—as Joyce or Kafka; and as for the question of truth, I see no way of deciding which one of them is closer to the "truth" in his writing. The national and personal ambiguities in the work of James, which were bound up in some way with the ambiguities of his own life, are just as true as, say, Joyce's rejection, in the name of the uncompromising artist, of

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"my home, my fatherland, or my church," which was also tied up with some neurotic need to dissociate himself from the conventional world.

The opposition between "truth" and "neurosis" is actually a clash of two myths, the myth of the artist as philosopher and moralist and the myth of the messianic madman. It is the traditional split, celebrated by Nietzsche, between the Apollonian and Dionysian view of art: between Apollo, the god of light, poetry, and prophecy, who stood for self-control, tranquillity, and radiance, and Dionysius, who represented frenzy, intoxication, and mystery, and brought art to the edge of barbarism and pathology. In our time, however, the distinction between the two is slowly disappearing, and—who knows? —maybe some day the neurotic artist will become a pillar of society.

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Elizabeth Bishop

VISITS TO ST. ELIZABETHS
(1950)

This is the house of Bedlam.

This is the man
that lies in the house of Bedlam.

This is the time
of the tragic man
that lies in the house of Bedlam.

This is a wristwatch
telling the time
of the talkative man
that lies in the house of Bedlam.

This is a sailor
wearing the watch
that tells the time
of the honored man
that lies in the house of Bedlam.

This is the roadstead all of board
reached by the sailor
wearing the watch
that tells the time
of the old, brave man
that lies in the house of Bedlam.

These are the years and the walls of the ward,
the winds and clouds of the sea of board
sailed by the sailor
wearing the watch
that tells the time

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of the cranky man
that lies in the house of Bedlam.

This is a Jew in a newspaper hat
that dances weeping down the ward
over the creaking sea of board
beyond the sailor
winding his watch
that tells the time
of the cruel man
that lies in the house of Bedlam.

This is a world of books gone flat.
This is a Jew in a newspaper hat
that dances weeping down the ward
over the creaking sea of board
of the batty sailor
that winds his watch
that tells the time
of the busy man
that lies in the house of Bedlam.

This is a boy that pats the floor
to see if the world is there, is flat,
for the widowed Jew in the newspaper hat
that dances weeping down the ward
waltzing the length of a weaving board
by the silent sailor
that hears his watch
that ticks the time
of the tedious man
that lies in the house of Bedlam.

These are the years and the walls and the door
that shut on a boy that pats the floor
to feel if the world is there and flat.
This is a Jew in a newspaper hat
that dances joyfully down the ward
into the parting seas of board
past the staring sailor

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that shakes his watch
that tells the time
of the poet, the man
that lies in the house of Bedlam.

This is a soldier home from the war.
These are the years and the walls and the door
that shut on a boy that pats the floor
to see if the world is round or flat.
This is a Jew in a newspaper hat
that dances carefully down the ward,
walking the plank of a coffin board
with the crazy sailor
that shows his watch
that tells the time
of the wretched man
that lies in the house of Bedlam.

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Heinrich Boll

CHRISTMAS EVERY DAY

Symptoms of decline have become evident in our family. For a time we were at pains to disregard them, but now we have resolved to face the danger. I dare not, as yet, use the word breakdown, but disturbing facts are piling up at such a rate as to constitute a menace and to compel me to report things that will sound disagreeable to my contemporaries; no one, however, can dispute their reality. The minute fungi of destruction have found lodgement beneath the hard, thick crust of respectability; colonies of deadly parasites that proclaim the end of a whole tribe's irreproachable correctness. Today we must deplore our disregard of Cousin Franz, who began long ago to warn us of the dreadful consequences that would result from an event that was harmless enough in itself. So insignificant indeed was the event that the disproportion of the consequences now terrifies us. Franz warned us betimes. Unfortunately he had too little standing. He had chosen a calling that no member of the family had ever followed before, and none ever should have: he was a boxer. Melancholy even in youth and possessed by a devoutness that was always described as "pious fiddle-faddle," he early adopted ways that worried my Uncle Franz, that good, kind man. He was wont to neglect his schoolwork to a quite abnormal degree. He used to meet disreputable companions in the thickets and deserted parks of the suburbs, and there practice the rough discipline of the prize fight, with no thought for his neglected humanistic heritage. These youngsters early revealed the vices of their generation, which, as has since become abundantly evident, is really worthless. The exciting spiritual combats of earlier centuries simply did not interest them; they were far too concerned with the dubious excitements of their own. At first I thought Franz's piety in contradiction to his systematic exercises in passive and active brutality. But today I begin to suspect a connection. This is a subject I shall have to return to.

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And so it was Franz who warned us in good time, who refused above all to have anything to do with certain celebrations, calling the whole thing a folly and a disgrace, and later on declined to participate in those measures that proved necessary for the continuance of what he considered evil. But, as I have said, he had too little standing to get a hearing in the family circle.

Now, to be sure, things have gone so far that we stand helpless, not knowing how to call a halt.

Franz has long since become a famous boxer, but today he rejects the praises that the family lavishes on him with the same indifference he once showed toward their criticism.

His brother, however—my Cousin Johannes, a man for whom I would at any time have walked through fire, the successful lawyer and favorite son of my Uncle—Johannes is said to have struck up relations with the Communist Party, a rumor I stubbornly refuse to believe. My Cousin Lucie, hitherto a normal woman, is said to frequent disreputable nightclubs, accompanied by her helpless husband, and to engage in dances that I can only describe as existential. Even Uncle Franz, that good, kind man, is reported to have remarked that he is weary of life, he whom the whole family considered a paragon of vitality and the very model of what we were taught to call a Christian businessman.

Doctors' bills are piling up, psychiatrists and analysts are being called in. Only my Aunt Milla, who must be considered the cause of it all, enjoys the best of health, smiling, well and cheerful, as she has been almost all her life. Her liveliness and cheerfulness are slowly beginning to get on our nerves after our very serious concern about the state of her health. For there was a crisis in her life that threatened to be serious. It is just this that I must explain.

II

In retrospect it is easy enough to determine the source of a disquieting series of events, but only now, when I regard the matter dispassionately, do the things that have been taking place in our family for almost two years appear out of the ordinary.

We might have surmised earlier that something was not quite right. Something in fact was not, and if things ever were quite right—

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which I doubt—events are now taking place that fill me with consternation.

For a long time Aunt Milla has been famous in our family for her delight in decorating the Christmas tree, a harmless though particularized weakness which is fairly widespread in our country. This weakness of hers was indulgently smiled at by one and all, and the resistance that Franz showed from his earliest days to this "nonsense" was treated with indignation, especially since Franz was in other respects a disturbing young man. He refused to take part in the decoration of the tree. Up to a certain point all this was taken in stride. My aunt had become accustomed to Franz's staying away from the preparations at Advent and also from the celebration itself and only putting in an appearance for the meal. It was not even mentioned.

At the risk of making myself unpopular, I must here mention a fact in defense of which I can only say that it really is a fact. In the years 1939 to 1945 we were at war. In war there is singing, shooting, oratory, fighting, starvation and death—and bombs are dropped. These are thoroughly disagreeable subjects, and I have no desire to bore my contemporaries by dwelling on them. I must only mention them because the war had an influence on the story I am about to tell. For the war registered on my aunt simply as a force that, as early as Christmas 1939, began to threaten her Christmas tree. To be sure, this tree of hers was peculiarly sensitive.

As its principal attraction my Aunt Milla's Christmas tree was furnished with glass gnomes that held cork hammers in their upraised hands. At their feet were bell-shaped anvils, and under their feet candles were fastened. When the heat rose to a certain degree, a hidden mechanism went into operation, imparting a hectic movement to the gnomes' arms; a dozen in number, they beat like mad on the bell-shaped anvils with their cork hammers, thus producing a concerted, high-pitched, elfin tinkling. And at the top of the tree stood a red-cheeked angel, dressed in silver, who at certain intervals opened his lips and whispered "Peace, peace." The mechanical secret of the angel was strictly guarded, and I only learned about it later, when as it happened I had the opportunity of admiring it almost weekly. Naturally in addition to this my aunt's Christmas tree was decorated with sugar rings, cookies, angel hair, marzipan figures and, not to

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be forgotten, strands of tinsel. I still remember that the proper preparation of these varied decorations cost a good deal of trouble, demanding the help of all, and the whole family on Christmas Eve was too nervous to be hungry. The mood, as people say, was simply terrible, and the one exception was my Cousin Franz, who of course had taken no part in the preparations and was the only one to enjoy the roasts, asparagus, creams and ices. If after that we came for a call on the day after Christmas and ventured the bold conjecture that the secret of the speaking angel resided in the same sort of mechanism that makes certain dolls say "Mama" or "Papa," we were simply greeted by derisive laughter.

Now it is easy to understand that in the neighborhood of falling bombs such a sensitive tree would be in great danger. There were terrible times when the gnomes pitched down from the tree, and once even the angel fell. My aunt was inconsolable. She went to endless pains to restore the tree completely after each air raid so as to preserve it at least through the Christmas holidays. But by 1940 it was out of the question. Once more at the risk of making myself unpopular I must briefly mention here that the number of air raids on our city was considerable, to say nothing of their severity. In any case my aunt's Christmas tree fell victim to the modern art of war (regulations forbid me to say anything about other victims); foreign ballistics experts temporarily extinguished it.

We all sympathized with our aunt, who was an amiable and charming woman, and pretty into the bargain. It pained us that she was compelled, after bitter struggles, endless disputes, scenes and tears, to agree to forego her tree for the duration.

Fortunately—or should I say unfortunately?—this was almost the only aspect of the war that was brought home to my aunt. The bunker my uncle built was really bombproof; in addition a car was always ready to whisk my Aunt Milla away to places where nothing was to be seen of the immediate effects of war. Everything was done to spare her the sight of the horrible ruins. My two cousins had the good fortune not to see military service in its harshest form. Johannes at once entered my uncle's firm, which played an essential part in the wholesale grocery business of our city. Besides, he suffered from gall bladder trouble. Franz on the other hand became a soldier, but he was only engaged in guarding prisoners, a post which

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he exploited to the extent of making himself unpopular with his military superiors by treating Russians and Poles like human beings. My Cousin Lucie was not yet married at that time and helped with the business. One afternoon a week she did voluntary war work, embroidering swastikas. But this is not the place to recite the political sins of my relations.

On the whole, then, there was no lack of money or food or reasonable safety, and my aunt's only sorrow was the absence of her tree. My Uncle Franz, that good, kind man, had for almost fifty years rendered invaluable service by purchasing oranges and lemons in tropical and sub-tropical countries and selling them at an appropriate profit. During the war he extended his business to less valuable fruits and to vegetables. After the war, however, the principal objects of his interest became popular once more under the name of citrus fruits and caused sharp competition in business circles. Here Uncle Franz succeeded once more in playing a decisive role by introducing the populace to a taste for vitamins and himself to a sizable fortune. He was almost seventy by that time, however, and wanted to retire and leave the business to his son-in-law. It was then that the event took place which made us smile at the time but which we now recognize as the cause of the whole affair.

My Aunt Milla began again with her Christmas tree. That was harmless in itself; even the tenacity with which she insisted that everything should be "as it used to be" only caused us to smile. At first there was really no reason to take the matter too seriously. To be sure, the war had caused much havoc which it was our duty to put right, but why—so we asked ourselves—deprive a charming old lady of this small joy?

Everyone knows how hard it was at that time to get butter and bacon. And even for my Uncle Franz, who had the best connections, it was impossible in the year 1945 to procure marzipan figures and chocolate rings. It was not until 1946 that everything could be made ready. Fortunately a complete set of gnomes and anvils as well as an angel had been preserved.

I still clearly remember the day on which we were invited. It was in January '47 and it was cold outside. But at my uncle's it was warm and there was no lack of delicacies. When the lights were turned out and the candles lighted, when the gnomes began to ham-

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mer and the angel whispered "Peace, peace," I had a vivid feeling of being restored to a time that I had assumed was gone forever.

This experience, however, though surprising was not extraordinary. The extraordinary thing was what happened three months later. My mother—it was now the middle of March—sent me over to find out whether "there was anything doing" with Uncle Franz. She needed fruit. I wandered into the neighboring quarter—the air was mild and it was twilight. Unsuspecting, I walked past the overgrown piles of ruins and the untended parks, turned in at the gate to my uncle's garden and suddenly stopped in amazement. In the evening quiet I could distinctly hear someone singing in my uncle's living room. Singing is a good old German custom, and there are lots of spring songs—but here I clearly heard:

Unto us a child is born!
The King of all creation . . .

I must admit I was confused. Slowly I approached and waited for the end of the song. The curtains were drawn and so I bent down to the keyhole. At that moment the tinkling of the gnomes' bells reached my ear, and I distinctly heard the angel whispering.

I did not have the courage to intrude, and walked slowly home. My report caused general merriment in the family, and it was not until Franz turned up and told us the details that we discovered what had happened.

In our region Christmas trees are dismantled at Candlemas and are then thrown on the rubbish heap where good-for-nothing children pick them up, drag them through ashes and other debris and play all sorts of games with them. This was the time when the dreadful thing happened. On Candlemas Eve after the tree had been lighted for the last time, and Cousin Johannes began to unfasten the gnomes from their clamps, my aunt who had hitherto been so gentle set up a dreadful screaming, so loud and sudden that my cousin was startled, lost control of the swaying tree, and in an instant it was all over; there was a tinkling and ringing; gnomes and bells, anvils and angel, everything pitched down; and my aunt screamed.

She screamed for almost a week. Neurologists were summoned by telegram, psychiatrists came rushing up in taxicabs—but all of

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them, even the specialists, left with a shrug of the shoulders and a faint expression of dread.

No one could put an end to this shrill and maddening concert. Only the strongest drugs provided a few hours' rest, and the dose of Luminal that one can daily prescribe for a woman in her sixties without endangering her life is, alas, slight. But it is anguish to have a woman in the house screaming with all her might: on the second day the family was completely disorganized. Even the consolation of the priest, who was accustomed to attend the celebration on Holy Eve, remained unavailing: my aunt screamed.

Franz made himself particularly unpopular by advising that a regular exorcism be performed. The minister rebuked him, the family was alarmed by his medieval views, and his reputation for brutality eclipsed for several weeks his reputation as a boxer.

Meanwhile everything was tried to cure my aunt's ailment. She refused nourishment, did not speak, did not sleep; cold water was tried, hot water, foot baths, alternate cold and hot baths; the doctors searched the lexicons for the name of this complex but could not find it. And my aunt screamed. She screamed until my Uncle Franz—that really kind, good man—hit on the idea of putting up a new Christmas tree.

III

The idea was excellent, but to carry it out proved extremely hard. It was now almost the middle of February, and to find a presentable fir tree in the market at that time is naturally difficult. The whole business world has long since turned with happy alacrity to other things. Carnival time is near: masks, pistols, cowboy hats and fanciful gypsy headgear fill the shop windows where angels and angel hair, candles and mangers, were formerly on view. In the candy stores Christmas items have long since gone back to the storeroom, while fireworks now adorn the windows. Nowhere in the regular market is a fir tree to be found.

Finally an expedition of rapacious grandchildren was fitted out with pocket money and a sharp hatchet. They rode to the state forest and came back toward evening, obviously in the best of spirits, with a silver fir. But meanwhile it was discovered that four gnomes, six

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bell-shaped anvils and the crowning angel had been completely destroyed. The marzipan figures and the cookies had fallen victim to the rapacious grandchildren. This coming generation, too, is worthless, and if any generation was ever of any worth—which I doubt—I am slowly coming to the belief that it was the generation of our fathers.

Although there was no lack of cash or the necessary connections, it took four days more before the decorations were complete. Meanwhile my aunt screamed uninterruptedly. Messages to the German centers of the toy business, which were just then resuming operations, were dispatched by wireless, hurried telephone conversations were carried on, packages were delivered in the night by heated young postal employees, an import license from Czechoslovakia was obtained, by bribery, without delay.

These days will stand out in the chronicle of my uncle's family by reason of the extraordinary consumption of coffee, cigarettes and nervous energy. Meanwhile my aunt fell into a decline: her round face became harsh and angular, her expression of kindliness changed to one of unalterable severity, she did not eat, she did not drink, she screamed constantly, she was attended by two nurses, and the dose of Luminal had to be increased daily.

Franz told us that the whole family was in the grip of a morbid tension when finally, on the twelfth of February, the decoration of the Christmas tree was at last completed. The candles were lighted, the curtains were drawn, my aunt was brought out from her sickroom, and in the family circle there was only the sound of sobs and giggles. My aunt's expression relaxed at sight of the candles, and when the heat had reached the proper point and the glass gnomes began to pound like mad and finally the angel, too, whispered "Peace, peace," a beautiful smile illuminated her face. Shortly thereafter everyone began to sing "O Tannenbaum." To complete the picture, they had invited the minister, whose custom it was to spend Christmas Eve at my Uncle Franz's; he, too, smiled, he too was relieved and joined in the singing.

What no test, no psychological opinion, no expert search for hidden traumas had succeeded in doing, my uncle's sympathetic heart had accomplished. This good, kind man's Christmas-tree therapy had saved the situation.

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My aunt was reassured and almost—so they hoped at the time—cured. After more songs had been sung and several plates of cookies had been emptied, everyone was tired and went to bed. And, imagine, my aunt slept without sedatives. The two nurses were dismissed, the doctors shrugged their shoulders, and everything seemed in order. My aunt ate again, drank again, was once more kind and amiable.

But the following evening at twilight, when my uncle was reading his newspaper beside his wife under the tree, she suddenly touched him gently on the arm and said: "Now we will call the children for the celebration. I think it's time." My uncle admitted to us later that he was startled, but he got up and hastily summoned his children and grandchildren and dispatched a messenger for the minister. The latter appeared, somewhat distraught and amazed; the candles were lighted, the gnomes hammered away, the angel whispered, there was singing and eating—and everything seemed in order.

Now all vegetation is subject to certain biological laws, and fir trees torn from the soil have a well-known tendency to wilt and lose their needles, especially if they are kept in a warm room, and in my uncle's house it was warm. The life of the silver fir is somewhat longer than that of the common variety, as the well-known work *Abies Vulgaris and Abies Nobilis* by Doctor Hergenring has shown. But even the life of the silver fir is not unlimited. As Carnival approached it became clear that my aunt would have to be prepared for a new sorrow: the tree was rapidly losing its needles, and at the evening singing a slight frown appeared on her forehead. On the advice of a really outstanding psychologist an attempt was made in light, casual conversation to warn her of the possible end of the Christmas season, especially as the trees outside were now covered with leaves, which is generally taken as a sign of approaching spring whereas in our latitudes the word Christmas connotes wintry scenes. My resourceful uncle proposed one evening that the songs "All the birds are now assembled" and "Come, lovely May" should be sung, but at the first verse of the former such a scowl appeared on my aunt's face that the singers quickly broke off and intoned "O Tannenbaum." Three days later my cousin Johannes was in-

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structed to undertake a quiet dismantling operation, but as soon as he stretched out his hand and took the cork hammer from one of the gnomes my aunt broke into such violent screaming that the gnome was immediately given back his implement, the candles were lighted and somewhat hastily but very loudly everyone began to sing "Silent Night."

But the nights were no longer silent; groups of singing, youthful revelers streamed through the city with trumpets and drums, everything was covered with streamers and confetti, masked children crowded the streets, fired guns, screamed, some sang as well, and a private investigation showed that there were at least sixty thousand cowboys and forty thousand gypsy princesses in our city: in short it was Carnival, a holiday that is celebrated in our neighborhood with as much enthusiasm as Christmas or even more. But my aunt seemed blind and deaf: she deplored the carnival costumes that inevitably appeared at this time in the wardrobes of our household; in a sad voice she lamented the decline of morals that caused people even at Christmas to indulge in such disgraceful practices, and when she discovered a toy balloon in Lucie's bedroom, a balloon that had, to be sure, collapsed but nevertheless clearly showed a white fool's cap painted on it, she broke into tears and besought my uncle to put an end to these unholy activities.

They were forced to realize with horror that my aunt actually believed it was still Christmas Eve. My uncle called a family council, requested consideration for his wife in view of her extraordinary state of mind, and at once got together an expedition to insure that at least the evening celebration would be peacefully maintained.

While my aunt slept the decorations were taken down from the old tree and placed on a new one, and her state of health continued to be satisfactory.

Carnival, too, went by, spring came for fair; instead of "Come Lovely May" one might properly have sung "Lovely May, Thou Art Here." June arrived. Four Christmas trees had already been discarded and none of the newly summoned doctors could hold out hope of improvement. My aunt remained firm. Even that internationally famous authority, Doctor Bless, had returned to his study, shrugging his shoulders, after having pocketed an honorarium in the

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sum of 1365 marks, thereby demonstrating once more his complete unworldliness. A few tentative attempts to put an end to the celebration or to intermit it were greeted with such outcries from my aunt that these sacrileges had to be abandoned once and for all.

The dreadful thing was that my aunt insisted that all those closest to her must be present. Among these were the minister and the grandchildren. Even the members of the family could only be compelled by extreme severity to appear punctually; with the minister it was even more difficult. For some weeks he kept it up without protest, out of consideration for his aged pensioner, but then he attempted, clearing his throat in embarrassment, to make it clear to my uncle that this could not go on. The actual celebration was short—it lasted only about thirty-eight minutes—but even this brief ceremonial, the minister maintained, could not be kept up indefinitely. He had other obligations, evening conferences with his confratres, duties connected with his cure of souls, not to mention his regular Saturday confessional. He agreed, however, to some weeks' continuance; but toward the end of May, he began energetic attempts to escape. Franz stormed about, seeking accomplices in the family for his plan to have his mother put in an institution. Everyone turned him down.

And yet difficulties continued. One evening the minister was missing and could not be located either telephonically or by messenger, and it became evident that he had simply skipped out. My uncle swore horribly and took the occasion to describe the servants of the Church in words I must decline to repeat. In this extremity one of the chaplains, a man of humble origin, was requested to help out. He did so, but behaved so abominably that it almost resulted in a catastrophe. However, one must bear in mind that it was June and therefore hot; nevertheless the curtains were drawn to give at least an illusion of wintry twilight and in addition the candles had been lighted. Then the celebration began. The chaplain had, to be sure, heard of this extraordinary event but had no proper idea of it. There was general apprehension when he was presented to my aunt as the minister's substitute. Unexpectedly she accepted this change in the program. Well then, the gnomes hammered, the angel whispered, "O Tannenbaum" was sung, then there was the eating of cookies, more singing, and suddenly the chaplain was

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overcome by a paroxysm of laughter. Later he admitted that it was the line ". . . in winter, too, when snow is falling" that had been too much for him to endure without laughing. He burst out with clerical tactlessness, left the room and was seen no more. All looked at my aunt apprehensively, but she only murmured resignedly something about "proletarians in priest's robes" and put a piece of marzipan in her mouth. We too deplored this event at the time—but today I am inclined to regard it as an outbreak of quite natural hilarity.

Here I must remark, if I am to be true to the facts, that my uncle exploited his connection with the highest Church authorities to lodge a complaint against both the minister and the chaplain. The matter was taken up with utmost correctness, proceedings were instituted on the grounds of neglect of pastoral duty, and in the first instance the two clergymen were exonerated. Further proceedings are in preparation.

Fortunately a pensioned prelate was found in the neighborhood. This charming old gentleman agreed, with amiable matter-of-factness, to hold himself in readiness daily for the evening celebration. But I am anticipating. My Uncle Franz, who was sensible enough to realize that no medical aid would be of avail and who stubbornly refused to try exorcism, was also a good enough businessman to plan economies for the long haul. First of all, by mid-June, the grandchildren's expeditions were stopped because they proved too expensive. My resourceful Cousin Johannes, who was on good terms with all branches of the business world, discovered that Söderbaum and Company were in a position to provide fresh fir trees. For almost two years now this firm has done noble service in sparing my relations' nerves. At the end of six months Söderbaum and Company substantially reduced their charges and agreed to have the period of delivery determined most precisely by their conifer specialist Doctor Alfast, so that three days before the old tree became unpresentable a new one would be delivered and could be decorated at leisure. As an additional precaution two dozen gnomes and three crowning angels were kept constantly in reserve.

To this day the candies remain a sore point. They show a disturbing tendency to melt and drip down from the tree more quickly and completely than wax, at any rate in the summer months. Every effort to preserve them by carefully concealed refrigeration

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has thus far come to grief, as has a series of attempts to substitute artificial decorations. The family remains, however, gratefully receptive toward any proposal that might result in reducing the costs of this continuing festival.

IV

Meanwhile the daily celebrations in my uncle's house have taken on an almost professional regularity. People assemble under the tree or around the tree. My aunt comes in, the candles are lighted, the gnomes begin to hammer and the angel whispers "Peace, peace," songs are sung, cookies are nibbled, there is a little conversation and then everyone retires, yawning and murmuring "Merry Christmas to you, too." The young people turn to the forms of diversion dictated by the season, while my good, kind Uncle Franz goes to bed when Aunt Milla does. The smoke of the candles lingers in the room, there is the mild aroma of heated fir needles and the smell of spices. The gnomes, slightly phosphorescent, remain motionless in the darkness, their arms raised threateningly, and the angel can be seen in his silvery robes which are obviously phosphorescent too.

Perhaps it is superfluous to state that in our whole family circle the enjoyment of the real Christmas Eve has suffered a considerable diminution: we can, if we like, admire a classical Christmas tree at our uncle's at any time—and it often happens when we are sitting on the veranda in summertime after the toil and trouble of the day, pouring my uncle's mild orange punch down our throats, that the soft tinkling of glass bells comes to us and we can see in the twilight the gnomes hammering away like spry little devils while the angel whispers "Peace, peace." And it is still disconcerting to hear my uncle in mid-summer suddenly whisper to his children: "Please light the tree, Mother will be right out." Then, usually on the dot, the prelate enters, a kindly old gentleman whom we have all taken to our hearts because he plays his role so admirably, if indeed he knows that he is playing one. But no matter: he plays it, white-haired, smiling, with the violet band beneath his collar giving his appearance the final touch of distinction. And it gives one an extraordinary feeling on a mild summer evening to hear the excited

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cry: "The snuffer, quick, where is the snuffer?" It has even happened during severe thunderstorms that the gnomes have been suddenly impelled to lift their arms without the agency of heat and swing them wildly as though giving a special performance—a phenomenon that people have tried, rather unimaginatively, to explain by the prosaic word "electricity."

A by no means inessential aspect of this arrangement is the financial one. Even though in general our family suffers no lack of cash, such extraordinary expenses upset all calculations. For naturally, despite precautions, the breakage of gnomes, anvils, and hammers is enormous, and the delicate mechanism that causes the angel to speak requires constant care and attention and must now and again be replaced. I have, incidentally, discovered its secret: the angel is connected by a cable with a microphone in the adjoining room, in front of whose metal snout there is a constantly rotating phonograph record which, at proper intervals, whispers "Peace, peace." All these things are the more costly because they are designed for use on only a few occasions during the year, whereas with us they are subjected to daily wear and tear. I was astounded when my uncle told me one day that the gnomes actually had to be replaced every three months, and that a complete set of them cost no less than 128 marks. He said he had requested an engineering friend of his to try strengthening them by a rubber covering without spoiling the beauty of the tone. This experiment was unsuccessful. The consumption of candles, butter-and-almond cookies, marzipan, the regular payments for the trees, doctor's bills and the quarterly honorarium that has to be given to the prelate, altogether, said my uncle, come to an average daily expense of 11 marks, not to mention the nervous wear and tear and other disturbances of health that began to appear in the fall of the first year. These upsets were generally ascribed, at the time, to that autumnal sensibility that is always noticeable.

The real Christmas celebration went off quite normally. Something like a sigh of relief ran through my uncle's family when other families could be seen gathered under Christmas trees, others too had to sing and eat butter-and-almond cookies. But the relief lasted only as long as the Christmas holidays. By the middle of January my Cousin Lucie began to suffer from a strange ailment: at the sight

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of Christmas trees lying on the streets and on rubbish heaps she broke into hysterical sobs. Then she had a real attack of insanity which the family tried to discount as a nervous breakdown. At a coffee party in a friend's house she struck a dish out of her hostess' hand as the latter was smilingly offering her butter-and-almond cookies. My cousin is, to be sure, what is called a temperamental woman: and so she struck the dish from her friend's hand, went up to the Christmas tree, tore it from its stand and trampled on the glass balls, the artificial mushrooms, the candles and the stars, the while emitting a continuous roar. The assembled ladies fled, including the hostess. They let Lucie rage, and stood waiting for the doctor in the vestibule, forced to give ear to the sound of crashing china within. Painful though it is for me, I must report that Lucie was taken away in a straitjacket.

Sustained hypnotic treatment checked her illness, but the actual cure proceeded very slowly. Above all, release from the evening celebration, which the doctor demanded, seemed to do her visible good; after a few days she began to brighten. At the end of ten days the doctor could risk at least talking to her about butter-and-almond cookies, although she stubbornly persisted in refusing to eat them. The doctor then struck on the inspired idea of feeding her some sour pickles and offering her salads and nourishing meat dishes. That was poor Lucie's real salvation. She laughed once more and began to interject ironic observations into the endless therapeutic interviews she had with her doctor.

To be sure, the vacancy caused by her absence from the evening celebration was painful to my aunt, but it was explained to her by a circumstance that is an adequate excuse in any woman's eyes—pregnancy.

But Lucie had created what is called a precedent: she had proved that although my aunt suffered when someone was absent, she did not immediately begin to scream, and now my Cousin Johannes and his brother-in-law Carl attempted to infringe on the severe regulations, giving sickness as excuse or business appointments or some other quite transparent pretext. But here my uncle remained astonishingly inflexible: with iron severity he decreed that only in exceptional cases upon presentation of acceptable evidence could very short leaves of absence be permitted. For my aunt noticed

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every further dereliction at once and broke into silent but continuing tears, which gave rise to the most serious apprehensions.

At the end of four weeks Lucie, too, returned and said she was ready to take part once more in the daily ceremony, but her doctor had insisted that a jar of pickles and a platter of nourishing sandwiches should be held in readiness, since her butter-and-almond trauma had proved incurable. Thus for a time, through my uncle's unexpected severity, all breaches of discipline were suppressed.

Shortly after the first anniversary of the daily Christmas celebration, disquieting rumors began to circulate: my Cousin Johannes was said to have consulted a doctor friend of his about my aunt's life expectancy, a truly sinister rumor which throws a disturbing light on a peaceful family's evening gatherings. The doctor's opinion is said to have been crushing for Johannes. All my aunt's vital organs, which had always been sound, were in perfect condition; her father's age at the time of his death had been seventy-eight, and her mother's eighty-six. My aunt herself is sixty-two, and so there is no reason to prophesy an early passing. Still less reason, I consider, to wish for one. After this when my aunt fell ill in midsummer —the poor woman suffered from vomiting and diarrhea—it was hinted that she had been poisoned, but I expressly declare here and now that this rumor was simply the invention of evil-minded relations. The trouble was clearly shown to have been caused by an infection brought into the house by one of the grandchildren. Moreover, analyses that were made of my aunt's stools showed not the slightest trace of poison.

That same summer Johannes gave the first evidences of antisocial inclinations: he resigned from the singing circle and gave notice in writing that he planned to take no further part in the cultivation of the German song. It is only fair for me to add, however, that, despite the academic distinctions he had won, he was always an uncultivated man. For the "Virhymnia" the loss of his bass voice was a serious matter.

My brother-in-law Carl began secretly to consult travel agencies. The land of his dreams had to have unusual characteristics: no fir trees must grow there and their importation must be forbidden or rendered unfeasible by a high tariff; besides—on his wife's account —the secret of preparing butter-and-almond cookies must be un-

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known and the singing of German Christmas songs forbidden by law. Carl declared himself ready to undertake hard physical labor.

Since then he has been able to dispense with secrecy because of a complete and very sudden change which has taken place in my uncle. This happened at such a disagreeable level that we have really had cause to be disconcerted. That sober citizen, of whom it could be said that he was as stubborn as he was good and kind, was observed performing actions that are neither more nor less than immoral and will remain so as long as the world endures. Things became known about him, testified to by witnesses, that can only be described by the word adultery. And the most dreadful thing is that he no longer denies them, but claims for himself the right to live in circumstances and in relationships that make special legislation seem justifiable. Awkwardly enough, this sudden change became evident just at the time when the second hearing of the two parish priests was called. My Uncle Franz seems to have made such a deplorable impression as a witness, as disguised plaintiff indeed, that it must be ascribed to him alone that the second hearing turned out favorably for the two priests. But in the meantime all this had become a matter of indifference to Uncle Franz: his downfall is complete, already accomplished.

He too was the first to hit upon the shocking idea of having himself represented by an actor at the evening celebration. He had found an unemployed *bon vivant,* who for two weeks imitated him so admirably that not even his wife noticed the impersonation. Nor did his children notice it either. It was one of the grandchildren who, during a pause in the singing, suddenly shouted: "Grandpapa has on socks with rings," and triumphantly raised the *bon vivant's* trouser leg. This scene must have been terrifying for the poor artist; the family, too, was upset and to avoid disaster struck up a song, as they had done so often before in critical situations. After my aunt had gone to bed, the identity of the artist was quickly established. It was the signal for almost complete collapse.

However one must bear in mind that a year and a half is a long time, and it was mid-summer again, the time when participation in the play is hardest on my relations. Listless in the heat, they nibble at sand tarts and ginger cookies, smile vacantly while they crack dried-out nuts, listen to the indefatigable hammering of the

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gnomes and wince when the rosy-cheeked angel above their heads whispers "Peace, peace." But they carry on while, despite their summer clothing, sweat streams down their cheeks and necks and soaks their shirts. Or rather: they have carried on so far.

For the moment money plays no part—almost the reverse. People are beginning to whisper that Uncle Franz has adopted business methods, too, which can hardly be described as those of a "Christian businessman." He is determined not to allow any material lessening of the family fortune, a resolution that both calms and alarms us.

The unmasking of the *bon vivant* led to a regular mutiny, as a result of which a compromise was reached: Uncle Franz agreed to pay the expenses of a small theatrical troupe which would replace him, Johannes, my brother-in-law Carl, and Lucie, and it was further understood that one of the four would always take part in person in the evening celebration in order to keep the children in check. Up till now the prelate has not noticed this deception, which can hardly be described as pious. Aside from my aunt and the children, he is the only original figure still in the play.

An exact schedule has been worked out which, in the family circle, is known as the operational program, and thanks to the provision that one of them is always present in person, the actors too are allowed certain vacations. Meanwhile it was observed that the latter were not averse to the celebration and were glad to earn some additional money; thus it was possible to reduce their wages, since fortunately there is no lack of unemployed actors. Carl tells me that there is reason to hope that these "salaries" can be reduced still more, especially as the actors are given a meal and it is well known that art becomes cheaper when food is involved.

I have already briefly mentioned Lucie's unhappy history: now she spends almost all her time in night spots and, on those days when she is compelled to take part in the household celebration, she is beside herself. She wears corduroy britches, colored pullovers, runs around in sandals and she has cut off her splendid hair in order to wear unbecoming bangs and a coiffure that I only recently discovered was once considered modern—it is known as a pony-tail. Although I have so far been unable to observe any overt immorality on her part, but only a kind of exaltation, which she herself describes as

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existentialism, nevertheless I cannot regard this development as desirable; I prefer quiet women, who move decorously to the rhythm of the waltz, know how to recite agreeable verses and whose nourishment is not exclusively sour pickles and goulash seasoned with paprika. My brother-in-law Carl's plans to emigrate seem on the point of becoming a reality: he has found a country, not far from the equator, which seems to answer his requirements, and Lucie is full of enthusiasm; in this country people wear clothes not unlike hers, they love sharp spices and they dance to those rhythms without which she maintains life is no longer possible for her. It is a little shocking that these two do not plan to obey the command "Abide in the land I have given you," but on the other hand I can understand their desire to flee.

Things are worse with Johannes. Unfortunately the evil rumor has proved true: he has become a Communist. He has broken off all relations with the family, pays no attention to anything and takes part in the evening celebration only in the person of his double. His eyes have taken on a fanatical expression, he makes public appearances behaving like a dervish at party meetings, neglects his practice and writes furious articles in the appropriate journals. Strangely enough he now sees more of Franz, who is vainly trying to convert him—and vice versa. Despite all their spiritual estrangement, they seem personally to have grown somewhat closer.

Franz I have not seen in a long time, but I have had news of him. He is said to have fallen into a profound depression, to spend his time in dim churches, and I believe that his piety can be fairly described as exaggerated. After the family misfortunes began he started to neglect his calling, and recently I saw on the wall of a ruined house a faded poster saying: "Last Battle of our Veteran Lenz against Lecoq. Lenz is Hanging up the Gloves." The date on the poster was March, and now we are well into August. Franz is said to have fallen on bad times. I believe he finds himself in a situation which has never before occurred in our family: he is poor. Fortunately he has remained single, and so the social consequences of his irresponsible piety harm only him. He has tried with amazing perseverance to have a guardian appointed for Lucie's children because he considers they are endangered by the daily celebration. But his efforts have remained fruitless; thank God, the children of

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wealthy people are not exposed to the interference of social institutions.

The one least removed from the rest of the family circle is, for all his deplorable actions, Uncle Franz. To be sure, despite his advanced years, he has a mistress. And his business practices, too, are of a sort that we admire, to be sure, but cannot at all approve. Recently he has appointed an unemployed stage manager to supervise the evening celebration and see that everything runs like clockwork. Everything does in fact run like clockwork.

V

Almost two years have now gone by—a long time. And I could not resist the temptation, during one of my evening strolls, to stop in at my uncle's house, where no true hospitality is any longer possible, since strange actors wander about every evening and the members of the family have devoted themselves to reprehensible pleasures. It was a mild summer evening, and as I turned into the avenue of chestnut trees I heard the verse:

The wintry woods are clad in snow . . .

A passing truck made the rest inaudible. Slowly and softly I approached the house and looked through a crack in the curtains. The similarity of the actors who were present to those of my relations whom they represented was so startling that for an instant I could not recognize which one this evening was the the superintendent, as they called him. I could not see the gnomes but I could hear them. Their chirping tinkle has a wave length that can penetrate any wall. The whispering of the angel was inaudible. My aunt seemed to be really happy: she was chatting with the prelate, and it was only later that I recognized my brother-in-law as the one real person present—if that is the right word. I recognized him by the way he rounded and pointed his lips as he blew out a match. Apparently there are unchangeable individual traits. This led me to reflect that the actors, too, were obviously treated to cigars, cigarettes and wine—in addition there was asparagus every evening. If their appetites were shameless—and what artist's is not?—this meant a considerable additional expense for my uncle. The children were playing with dolls

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and wooden wagons in a corner of the room. They looked pale and tired. Perhaps one really ought to have some consideration for them. I was struck by the idea that they might perhaps be replaced by wax dolls of the kind one sees in the windows of drugstores as advertisements for powdered milk and skin lotions. It seems to me those look quite natural.

As a matter of fact I intend to call the family's attention to the possible effect on the children's temperament of this unnatural daily excitement. Although a certain amount of discipline does no harm, it seems to me that they are being subjected to excessive demands.

I left my observation post when the people inside began to sing: "Silent Night." I simply could not bear the song. The air was so mild—and for an instant I had the feeling that I was watching an assembly of ghosts. Suddenly I had a craving for sour pickles and this gave me some inkling of how very much Lucie must have suffered.

I have now succeeded in having the children replaced by wax dolls. Their procurement was costly—Uncle Franz hesitated for some time—but one really could not go on irresponsibly feeding the children on marzipan every day and making them sing songs which in the long run might cause them psychic injury. The procurement of the dolls proved to be useful because Carl and Lucie really emigrated and Johannes also withdrew his children from his father's household. I bade farewell to Carl and Lucie and the children as they stood amid large traveling trunks. They seemed happy, if a little worried. Johannes, too, has left our town. Somewhere or other he is engaged in reorganizing a Communist cell.

Uncle Franz is weary of life. Recently he complained to me that people are always forgetting to dust off the dolls. His servants in particular cause him difficulties, and the actors seem inclined to be undisciplined. They drink more than they ought, and some of them have been caught filling their pockets with cigars and cigarettes. I advised my uncle to provide them with colored water and cardboard cigars.

The only reliable ones are my aunt and the prelate. They chat together about the good old times, giggle and seem to enjoy themselves, interrupting their conversation only when a song is struck up.

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In any event, the celebration goes on.

My cousin Franz has taken an amazing step. He has been accepted as a lay brother in a nearby monastery. When I saw him for the first time in a cowl I was startled: that large figure, with broken nose, thickened lips and melancholy expression, reminded me more of a prisoner than a monk. He seemed almost to have read my thoughts. "Life is a prison sentence," he said softly. I followed him into the interview room. We conversed haltingly, and he was obviously relieved when the bell summoned him to the chapel for prayers. I remained behind, thoughtful, as he departed: he went in a great hurry, and his haste seemed genuine.

(*Translated from the German by Denver Lindley*)

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POEMS

PANGLOSS' SONG

(A suppressed comic-operetta lyric)*

I

Dear boy, you will not hear me speak
With sorrow or with rancor
Of what has paled my rosy cheek
And blasted it with canker;
'Twas Love, great Love, that did the deed,
Through Nature's gentle laws,
And how should ill effects proceed
From so divine a cause?

Sweet honey comes from bees that sting,
As you are well aware.
To one adept in Reasoning,
Whatever pains Disease may bring
Are but the tangy seasoning
To Love's delicious fare.

II

Columbus and his men, they say,
Conveyed the virus hither
Whereby my features rot away
And vital powers wither;
Yet had they not traversed the seas
And come infected back—
Why, think of all the luxuries
That modern life would lack!

All bitter things conduce to sweet,
As this example shows.

* Removed from the recent production of *Candide* after the show's opening night in Boston.

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Without the little spirochete
We'd have no chocolate to eat,
Nor would tobacco's fragrance greet
The European nose.

III

Each nation guards its native land
With cannon and with sentry;
Inspectors look for contraband
At every port of entry;
Yet nothing can prevent the spread
Of Love's divine disease;
It rounds the world from bed to bed,
As pretty as you please.

Men worship Venus everywhere,
As plainly may be seen.
The decorations which I bear
Are nobler than the *Croix de Guerre,*
And gained in service of our fair
And universal Queen.

Richard Wilbur

MUNCH'S SCREAM

I

Observe. Ridged, raised, tactile, the horror
of the skinned head is there. It is skinned
which had a covering-up before,
and now is nude, and is determined

by what it perceives. The blood not Christ's,
blood of death without resurrection,
winds flatly in the air. Habit foists
conventional surrender to one

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response in vision, but it fails here,
where the partaking viewer is freed
into the under-skin of his fear.
Existence is laid bare, and married

to a movement of caught perception
where the unknown will become the known
as one piece of the rolling mountain
becomes another beneath the stone

which shifts now toward the happy valley
which is not prepared, as it could not
be, for the achieved catastrophe
which produces no moral upshot,

no curtain, epilogue, nor applause,
no Dame to return purged to the Manse,
(the Manse is wrecked)—not even the pause,
the repose of art that has distance.

II

We, unlike Munch, observe his The Scream
making words, since perhaps we too know
the head's "experience of extreme
disorder." We have made our bravo,

but such, of course, will never equal
the painting. What is the relation?
A word, which is at once richly full
of attributes: thinginess, reason,

reference, time, noise, among others;
bounces off the firm brightness of paint
as if it had no substance, and errs
toward verbalism, naturally. Mayn't

we say that time cannot represent
space in art? "The fascination of
what's impossible" may be present,
motivating the artist to move.

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So the poet, the talker, aims his
words at the object, and his words go
faster and faster, and now he is
like a cyclotron, breaking into

the structure of things by repeated
speed and force in order to lay bare
in words, naturally, unworded
insides of things, the things that are there.

Donald Hall

THE TRIAL

Increases. Chair-legs kick
Snow off the railing, take down
Three men with them, and want
The pure air to be sick
With broken bones. They taunt
All laws—having to clown,
Maybe, or freeze; but the van
Waits, and given a home
In unrolled gunny sacks,
They are set right. For Court
Rests on good men—the sort
(When boys would stand and frown)
Who'll seize a sofa next
And walk it off, unvexed,
(All for a Golden Dome)
Like nothing. Where's the bed
But carried according to plan?
And though, as it goes past
By piecemeal, on three backs,
The blonde in the doorway
Yells as if any delay
Were a judgment on her head,
She gladdens. Things move fast.

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Below, in that dark roar
Where rivets dance in the floor,
Will be no more broad noon;
There she will queen it soon
And rear up with a smile
At the royal state of affairs:
Quick-over is the style,
Men, and damn the stairs.

Frederick Bock

I CANNOT SHOUT THAT THE LYRIC LIE DECAYED

I cannot shout that the lyric lie decayed
On a latitude pursued by a spring moon,
Cannot silently shift my pen protesting
Against a frogthroated minstrel who is unwired
Without the skeleton of a harp. Listen.
The rain objects, and the wind is out of tune,
The bee hums flat and the wasp is hopping mad
At the fugue flowers allow. Lyric lie decay.
Today while I rested on my door I heard
An infant and an old man talking in verse.
This is spring when that may happen.
And it did. And still the lyric lie decayed.
I did not see a brand of fire spit flame
At the sea nor did I see a mountain dance.
But this was a dream heart hung with my anger:
And as they walked on through the mouth of a hill
I followed, as though called by a pied player.
I do not say that the lyric lie decayed.

John Fairfax

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Sidney Hook

SCIENTIFIC KNOWLEDGE AND PHILOSOPHICAL "KNOWLEDGE"*

I propose to raise some fundamental questions about the relation between scientific knowledge and philosophy. I shall begin with some naive observations which although inexact are hardly likely to be contested, and then proceed to issues of a more problematic and controversial character. The advantage of "naive observations" in sophisticated discussions is that they weaken the tendency to settle questions at the outset by definition.

Let us look away for a moment from the multiple ambiguities in the meaning of terms like "know," "knowing" and cognate expressions. It is a matter of common agreement, even among philosophers, that we derive considerable and reliable knowledge of the world and of ourselves from science, and from our own practical experience of everyday affairs. There is far less agreement, however, over whether in addition to this scientific and practical knowledge there is another category that may be called "philosophic knowledge." The reasons for this lack of knowledge are not difficult to perceive, considering the chaotic state of philosophic thought, the recurrent controversies and absence of any cumulative or progressive development within it. Philosophers even disagree about the nature of their subject matter (in this they resemble writers and artists), and a good part of their activity consists in extended justifications, even apologies, for their existence (in this they differ from writers and artists). I know of no other reputable field of thought that exists in such chaos; there is more unanimity even in disciplines such as anthropology or meteorology, which have barely reached the stage of

* This is a radically abridged version of a paper presented in a Colloquium on Thomism and Contemporary Philosophy, at St. Louis University, June 12, 1956, in which secular philosophers were invited to discuss philosophical issues with Catholic philosophers. A section of the paper devoted to a critique of angelology has been omitted.

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fledgling sciences. In no other field of thought are there "perennial" problems. Sciences grow by virtue of the fact that problems are solved, theoretical difficulties mastered, basic distinctions in language recognized. But in the field of philosophy, even distinctions that would appear to be basic, such as that between analytic and synthetic statements, are constantly being challenged. In our own time a mind as honest and acute as that of G. E. Moore has judged that ". . . unless new reasons never urged hitherto can be found, all the most important philosophic doctrines have as little claim to assent as the most superstitious beliefs of the lowest savages." This would seem to suggest that to apply the term "knowledge"—in the sense in which we use it for undisputed conclusions gained through one set of disciplines, the sciences—to the disputed conclusions or claims of philosophers, is only to invite confusion.

It may be argued that such confusion is more apparent than real. All large terms like "experience" and "life," no less than "knowledge," are infected with ambiguities which do not obstruct but facilitate communication. In this they are like terms in ordinary use whose meanings are blurred at the edges. We may say of them what Wittgenstein says of "games"—they are words that designate a *range* of familiar or similar meanings among which a "family resemblance" is present. Provided we recognize that some activities are *not* games, that there are different family-trees of resemblance, so that not everything is classifiable as one family, this observation, already suggested by Peirce, is illuminating. But I do not believe that it vindicates the conception of "philosophical knowledge." And this for two reasons. Some terms seem to possess a "more typical" family resemblance than others, just as we can more easily recognize some individuals as belonging to a certain family than we can others. For example, a basketball game is more clearly a game than is a bull fight which is played according to rules. And the latter is more clearly a game than is a political contest, or competitive business activity, which are sometimes cited as instances of the game of politics or the game of business. But although we call Russian roulette by the *name* of a game no one in his senses uses it as a game. In the end what determines whether we are to call some marginal activity a game or give it membership in a family of meanings is its resemblance to the most typical case, to the paradigmatic situation,

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to the best illustration of the family face. If we proceed in this way philosophical knowledge at best is a poor and distant relative of practical and scientific knowledge. Indeed, its legitimacy depends entirely upon its being like the latter, and it is certainly more unlike than like. Is philosophical knowledge a different *kind* of knowledge or is it knowledge of a special *field* or *aspect* of things like astronomy or linguistics? If the first, how can we explain the history of philosophy and its conflicts with scientific knowledge; if the second, how explain that it seems to be in a state more suggestive of astrology or psychoanalysis than of any well-ordered science?

If the state of philosophy today tends to confound those who would speak of "philosophic knowledge," the history of philosophy is an even more damaging witness against them. Philosophy as a subject matter once embraced the logical, physical, biological, social and psychological sciences. As these developed into recognized bodies of knowledge, they declared their independence, changed their names and scorned their origins, leaving philosophy to make *claims* to a special kind of knowledge—claims which many people, including some philosophers, regard merely as wishful, the expression of parochial interests and concerns. This allegedly special knowledge, some say, provides no truths but only guidance, hope or "comforts."

These strong impeachments would be turned aside if it could be established that philosophy, contrary to what most of its practitioners in the past believed, is actually autonomous in relation to science, that the kind of knowledge about nature and men that philosophy gives us is in no way dependent upon the concrete insights gained through science, technology and common sense. There are two hurdles to be cleared in establishing this. The first is the effect certain scientific findings have had in the past upon the philosophical view of man and his place in the universe. It is hard to defend the autonomy of philosophy when we consider the enormous influence of Copernicus, Galileo and Newton, in the seventeenth century, of Darwin in the nineteenth, of Mach and Einstein in the twentieth, on the philosophies of their time. The second hurdle is a potential one: if experimental biologists working today were able to synthesize unmistakably living things from inorganic substances, even those who firmly maintain the independence of philosophy would have a hard time convincing themselves that this particular

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scientific development had no bearing on the mind-body problem. A similar dilemma has been posed already by Rhine's experiments and investigations of paranormal phenomena, which some believe increase the probability of consciousness surviving bodily disintegration. In order to get past these two obstacles, we would have to redefine philosophy in such a way that, no matter what scientific knowledge disclosed about the world, our philosophical beliefs would not be affected; those beliefs would have to be valid for all possible, indeed, all imaginable worlds. It would then be necessary to show in what way these philosophical beliefs differed from purely logical statements, since they would be valid for worlds with the most contrary properties.

Now it is clear that many of the statements defended in the past as instances of "philosophical knowledge"—for example, that our physical space must be infinite or Euclidean, or that species are fixed and unalterable—have turned out to be incompatible with scientific knowledge. Therefore such statements must be considered false and can be dismissed as not knowledge at all. The history of the relation between what has been called philosophical knowledge and scientific knowledge suggests three general observations:

(a) We cannot know what does not make sense. We cannot have knowledge of the harmony of the spheres or the virtue of triangles if spheres are things that cannot be in harmony or disharmony and if "triangle" means what it means in Euclid. We cannot have knowledge about anything that has no intelligible opposite even though we disguise this fact from ourselves by speaking of analogical knowledge. We have no knowledge of "Being."

(b) We cannot know what isn't so. If there are no leprechauns or elves such as we read about in fairy tales, we cannot have knowledge of them even though we are able to describe the properties their behavior would exhibit if they did exist. Similarly, if there are no angels we cannot have knowledge of them; what is called knowledge of the angelic hierarchy is knowledge only of the classificatory scheme of them as set forth in a certain book or tradition, just as knowledge of the hierarchy of Olympian deities is not knowledge of any divine creatures, discovered or inferred, but only of what is contained in the works of Homer and other writers. (Actually, there

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is more empirical evidence, although far from convincing, for the existence of ghosts than of angels, for there are more people who claim to have seen, heard, spoken to and even photographed ghosts than angels. Among the mystifying attributes of ghosts that stand in the way of belief in their existence is their strong predilection for English domiciles.)

(c) We cannot know if we are only guessing. If, ignorant of what horses are running or of their past performances, I guess the winner, or if in a random selection or toss I guess the number or card that comes up, I cannot claim to have knowledge. Indeed, it is not likely that we would speak of "a game of chance" if any of the participants had knowledge of how things would turn out. If, however, I keep on guessing and my guesses turn out always or almost always to be right, others will in time be convinced that I have knowledge. At a certain point my success in guessing in itself constitutes a good reason for keeping on guessing in the manner that has proved successful.

Unless we have good reason for a judgment, or are in possession of evidence that warrants giving one particular answer rather than another, it is arbitrary to maintain that we have knowledge of any kind. Where we do not know, we can claim that our belief rests on faith. I shall use the term "faith" in the sense of belief that is not justified by evidence; knowledge, on the other hand, is belief that is so justified. To assert that knowledge, as well as belief, rests on faith is either to use the term "faith" in some special way or not to talk sense. The notion of knowledge as belief based on adequate evidence leaves the term "evidence" undefined, but for our purposes it will suffice to say that where knowledge of fact is claimed, evidence must rest directly or indirectly upon judgments gained by observation and upon such other judgments as may legitimately, or logically, be inferred from them.

The chief issues with which I am here concerned can be brought into focus by stating briefly a position defended by both Dewey and Russell, despite their not inconsiderable differences, to wit: *All knowledge that men have is scientific knowledge.*

This sounds very dogmatic, but is really an expression of intellectual humility that seeks to avoid unlimited credulity. It does not doubt that we possess scientific knowledge but leaves open the

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question of what we can have knowledge about. Answers to this question are supplied by individual discoveries in the various sciences. Such humility does not assert that the experience of knowledge exhausts all modes of experience or that scientific knowledge is all-knowing. It does not deny that there may be mysteries, but it approaches all alleged mysteries as if they were *gaps* in knowledge instead of unfathomable and unbridgeable abysses. It does not identify scientific method with the particular methods of physics, but rather with the pattern of hypothetico-deductive-experimental observation exhibited in the different sciences in different ways, depending upon the specific subject matter. We can study an individual's neurosis or a nation's history scientifically even if we cannot put it into a test tube.

Broadly speaking there is no opposition between common sense knowledge and scientific knowledge as knowledge, but only a difference in their objects and problems: direct use and enjoyment of things in the realm of common sense, and the winning of new facts, new laws, and a synthesis independent of present, or even of ultimate, use and enjoyment, in the scientific realm.

That the opposition between the two cannot be sustained is apparent from the fact that all scientific procedures that are well grounded take note of common sense identifications, distinctions and generalizations. There is no science whose language can be formalized to a point where it can dispense with everyday language. The scientific entities of theoretical physics could not be discovered, formulated or applied without referring ultimately to the gross objects and qualities of common sense experience. This is not to say that scientific entities are necessarily describable in terms of the qualities of common sense experience. We move from the vague and inexact toward the less vague and more exact. It was necessary to be able roughly to differentiate between colors in use before we could develop a scientific theory of color that would enable us to make finer and subtler differentiations. If we had no perceptions we could not discover the conditions of perception. If we could not distinguish between brain and mind what earthly use would the concept of brain-state have? As Susan Stebbing once put it (in *Philosophy and the Physicists*): "It is only because they (the scientists) are able to perceive the solidity of a piece of iron that they are able to discover

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that atoms are tenuous." Quantitative scientific determinations may ignore qualitative experiences, but they cannot abolish them, since they take their point of departure from them. Regardless of what the organizing categories of a science are, when its conclusions are applied, or when its rules of operational procedure are stated, they must take note of the catalogue of common things, their varying structures, functions and locations.

It is sometimes said that common sense inquiry operates with concepts that are direct transcripts of things and their qualities, while science uses theoretical constructs that are at best indirectly related to the elements of experience. This statement seems to me to be inadequate, on two counts. First, it overlooks the differing degrees of complexity among the constructs of the different sciences. These range from the relatively simple ones of biology and economics, which are not far removed from the abstractions of ordinary discourse, to the theoretical constructs of modern physics, which are far beyond description in such ordinary terms. Secondly, this distinction does not do justice to the extent to which common sense or ordinary discourse is shot through with theoretical constructs. A man need not be a scientist to talk about the *average* age of his children or the *potential* power of his automobile, the *reliability* of his neighbor's *memory,* the *honor* of his country. Although these instances involve only simple theoretical constructs, they are still constructs. This is not to deny the enormous difference between the language of common sense inquiry and that of science; but the difference is not a principled one, if only because the gradual changes in common sense language reflect the influence of scientific theory and discovery. Ordinary language in its historical growth usually shows the influence of the science of an earlier generation.

There are certain objections that must be dealt with by anyone who asserts that there is no knowledge except scientific knowledge. (1) Is not this view self-refuting? There is no science in which such an assertion is warranted, as a piece of knowledge. And if it is held to be knowledge nonetheless, is it not an instance of purely philosophical knowledge? (2) If there is no knowledge but scientific knowledge, are we not ruling out *a priori* the existence of supernatural entities and creatures, playing at being God at the very

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moment we are denying the possibility of his existence—a strange procedure for avowed empiricists? (3) If we recognize that there is such a thing as common sense knowledge, does this not contain an implicit admission that we have *some* metaphysical knowledge? I shall deal with these objections in the order given.

(1) That all human knowledge is scientific knowledge is a statement about human beings and about knowledge. It does not come from any specific science: it simply means that claims to having knowledge other than scientific cannot, broadly considered, be sustained. The statement reflects and summarizes an *historical* fact about certain bodies of knowledge that have been developed to a point where the control and mastery they make possible in meeting problems is open, publicly verifiable and, even though limited, compares favorably with all other methods of solving problems. At the same time it is not a mere summary of historical fact, but a proposal to use the term "knowledge" in such a way that all other claims to knowledge of the world shall be initially assessed as to validity in the light of criteria drawn from common sense and from scientific knowledge universally agreed to be highly reliable. It is true that a certain decision is involved in making such a statement, but the decision is not arbitrary: one can give good reasons for it or can point to the historical evidence that makes it a reasonable decision, show that in the past generalizations supported merely by hunches, guesses, visions, revelations, *a priori* reasoning, have turned out to be unreliable, and have failed to predict the occurrences with which they were concerned. In short, the justification for asserting that all knowledge is scientific is not a matter of definition but is, rather, pragmatic: such a view enables us to achieve our ends in the world, whatever they are, more effectively.

(2) "Ah! but that's just the rub," say critics of this view. "It begs the question not only about what can or cannot be knowledge but also about what can or cannot exist. It rules out of the world what cannot be scientifically verified. It rules out a timeless God, immortal souls, and many other things people have believed in."

The basic answer to this serious indictment may take various forms. First, every conception of knowledge must make assumptions about what constitutes knowledge, and one such set of assumptions will be incompatible with another. My assumptions about the nature

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of anything, man, rabbits or stars, must exclude some other assumptions about their nature. All assumptions, as *assumptions,* in this respect are on a par. The question once more becomes: are our assumptions arbitrary or reasonable?

Second, the answer may be that this conception of knowledge does not arbitrarily and in advance rule out God, soul, immortality, angels and devils as possible objects of knowledge. Many naturalists have declared that statements asserting the existence of these entities are doubtful or false, and such declarations could not have been made if the very possibility of these entities had been ruled out in advance as meaningless. As we have seen, if it makes no sense to say that we have knowledge of the existence of what is meaningless, it makes no more sense to deny the existence of the meaningless. To most naturalists, in contradistinction to many supernaturalists, the problem is not so much *what* God is as *that* he is. Further, there are some who pledge allegiance to scientific method as the only avenue by which knowledge can be gained who believe that the existence of such entities is still an open question, or who are unabashedly satisfied that the logic of experimental science makes belief in the existence of supernatural powers and entities at least as plausible as belief in electrons, if not more so.

The third, and perhaps most crucial, answer to this objection is that it can be shown that all human beings in their everyday experience are guided by the conception of knowledge as scientific knowledge. To deny this is palpably insincere. A Platonist might invidiously dub all empirical knowledge as "opinion," but no matter what one calls such knowledge, one acts on it, and to achieve one's ends one must necessarily act on it. The burden of proof rests entirely upon those who assert that there exists another kind of knowledge over and above technological, common sense, empirical knowledge, and the scientific knowledge which is an outgrowth and development of it. It is not enough to maintain that such a body of knowledge exists because people claim they are guided by it to solve specific problems. People do not always *do* as they say. It is not even enough to establish that such a body of knowledge exists to show that people *seem* to act on what they say, as do those who profess to be guided by astrology, numerology, angelology and Christian Science. Some connection must be established between the dif-

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ferential behavior of the actors in the concrete situations in which they face problems and the concepts by which they are presumably guided. There must be reasoned grounds for making one prediction about the future rather than another and confirmations greater than what one would expect on the basis of chance.

Fourth, we may answer the indictment by saying that if scientific knowledge is the paradigm of all genuine knowledge, then wherever any body of knowledge exists it should be possible by further inquiry to win *new* knowledge of fact as distinct from what can be learned merely by logical transformation.

(3) Even if the foregoing is granted is it not true that common sense knowledge presupposes a knowledge different from scientific knowledge? Whether this knowledge is called metaphysical or ontological, the claim sometimes made for it is that it grasps the nature of things directly, makes distinctions between kinds and classes of existence, and provides the matrix out of which questions concerning what, where, how, why and when arise and are answered. Now in one sense it is perfectly true to say that common sense knowledge recognizes distinctions and truths that are not part of any particular science. A color is different from a sound, all physical things are more than two-dimensional, full-grown human adults are larger and wiser than infants, water quenches thirst, no one remembers his own birth, dogs are more attached to their masters than cats—all these are instances of knowledge and yet not integrated into a formal science. They may be called pre-scientific: they are not incorrigible, and scientific knowledge may lead to their revision but at any definite time there will be an indeterminate number of items of knowledge of this character accepted as true by all practicing scientists. They are not less certain than scientific knowledge, only less detailed and precise.

Whatever the status of common sense knowledge, we must now come to grips with the claim that scientific knowledge is itself of only dubious validity as compared with two other types of knowledge, philosophy of nature and metaphysics. What we have regarded as scientific knowledge is called by Maritain "empirico-logical" or "perinoetic" knowledge, inferior in certainty, intelligibility and truth to philosophy of nature and metaphysics. Thinkers of this school are not altogether in agreement among themselves concerning the

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exact relationships which exist between common sense knowledge, empirical knowledge, physico-mathematical knowledge, philosophy of nature, and metaphysics. But it is with what they have in common that I wish to take issue. And what they have in common is expressed in the following representative comments:

What is true is that the explanations of science, since they do not bring us into intimate contact with the being of things, and are only explanatory of proximate causes or even simply of that kind of formal cause which is represented by the mathematico-legal option of phenomena (and the entities more or less arbitrarily constructed in support of that system) cannot suffice for the mind, which by necessity, and always, asks questions of a higher order and seeks to enter into regions of intelligibility. (Maritain, *The Degrees of Knowledge,* p. 59)

Superior, therefore independent, at least by its own formal constitution: philosophy (metaphysics and philosophy of nature) is as such independent with regard to the sciences.

It should be understood: there is no *formal* dependence of philosophy with regard to the sciences. No scientific results, no scientific theory, in short, no science in the exercise of its own proper means, can ever adequately cut the knot of a philosophical problem, for those problems depend both in the origin and their solution on a light which is not in the reach of science. (*Ibid,* p. 63)

For, formally speaking, metaphysics is in no degree an experimental science, but a form of knowledge far more purely rational than mathematics. (*Ibid,* p. 66). On the other hand, physico-mathematical knowledge is referred to as a well-founded myth which has contributed to build up the structure of that universe and its elements: it cannot endow it with an ontologically explanatory value. (*Ibid,* p. 226)

There are several assumptions made by this position about the nature of explanation and the nature of rationality that seem to me to be extremely questionable, but before discussing them I should like to look at some of the specific conclusions reached by this kind of philosophy of nature and metaphysics.

The philosophy of nature is presumably the study of sensible existence or of mobile being. Let us ask the simple question: what does the philosophy of nature tell us about the world of motion which emperiological physics does not? As a source I turn to a book

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inspired by the conception of the degrees and kinds of knowledge expressed in the citation above from Maritain—*Philosophical Physics* by V. E. Smith. Almost the first thing we are told is that the experimental scientist cannot possibly understand motion: "Motion eludes the emperiological physicist . . . he cannot claim to be a rival of the philosophical physicist in the study of the mobile world." The reason for this is that "time and motion in emperiological physics are not mobile." If this means that the conceptions of time and motion are not mobile, of course they are not. Our concepts do not have to move to understand motion any more than they have to eat to understand eating. If the reference is to the properties and behavior of moving things, this is precisely what physics tries to discover. Apparently, however, the fact that emperiological physics seeks to *discover* truths about motion is a sign that it is not strict science, indeed that it is not even strict physics because it is not a method of proof achieving its fulfillment in speculative knowledge but "only in the order of making inhabited by the engineer."

The criticism that modern physics is interested in discovery rather than in proof is hardly likely to be taken as a defect by those who believe that new discovery, the winning of new knowledge through confirmed prediction, is at least one sign of truth. Even proof ultimately rests on definitions or postulates. And if these refer to the nature of the world, only inductive empirical procedures can tell us whether one set of definitions or postulates is more justifiable than any others that are conceivable. The term "intelligible," when employed by those who criticize both classical mechanics and relativity physics as being ontologically defective, really means "familiar." Thus it is actually a psychological and historical concept. One man's intelligibility is another man's paradox and a third man's absurdity.

At any rate a philosophy of nature which impugns the truth of experimental science not in terms of findings but in terms of previously held metaphysical beliefs is not likely to give us greater insight or more reliable truths than the magical *Natur-philosophie* to which in some ways it is akin. I find the laws of motion, refinements aside, much more comprehensible, much more informative about the nature of bodies at rest and in motion, than such pronouncements of philosophical physics as that "motion is a mixture of act and potency," which seems to be a mixture of tautology and fantasy. I do not see

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that it follows in the least that a universe in which the principle of inertia holds is one in which no interactions or transaction between different things is possible. Nor do I see that the alleged consequence of such an initial principle—"that there would be no intrinsic causality like that exercised by form"—constitutes a *reductio ad absurdum*. The evidence for the principle of inertia is much stronger than that for the belief in intrinsic causality and for the view that form by itself has any influence in the executive order of nature.

The philosophy of nature seems to me to be a composite of Greek physics and Aristotelian metaphysics and to the degree that it is accepted is likely to constitute a psychological obstacle to the experimental study of nature. To object to the latter on the ground that it yields some, but not all, of the secrets of matter, would be permissible if we possessed a science that yielded all knowledge of nature's secrets. But philosophical physics yields no knowledge of nature's secrets whatsoever because it yields no knowledge at all, certainly no genuinely new knowledge. It claims to take its departure from the world of experience, which would make it empirical, but what it actually does is to use illustrations from experience as alleged truths which it maintains would constitute knowledge no matter what the world was like. It speaks of proof, but systematically confuses illustration with proof. Thus it raises and settles questions such as whether a compound is a complex individual body and has an "essential unity" by arbitrary definition, rather than by specific inquiry into chemical elements, mixtures and compounds. If the elements of a compound are "virtually" present in a substance, it is a genuine complex individual body; if not, not. Such distinctions throw absolutely no light on our knowledge of chemical elements and compounds.

As one Thomistic philosopher, Bonnet, puts it (in *The Modern Schoolman* for January 1944), the philosophy of Aquinas "furnishes us with the metaphysical 'rules' which govern the intimate being of any complex individual body." Whether such a complex individual body exists in *fact,* he adds, is not its concern. If it does exist, it can be cited as an illustration. The philosophy of nature, he holds, "has limited itself as it should, to establishing and elaborating the necessary laws of the being of such a (possible) body." All that has been established, however, is a certain way of talking about things, not

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that there is anything in the world the knowledge of which makes it necessary for us to talk about things this way. It may be a necessary law of the being of a centaur that it should be half man and half beast, but it is not necessary that this be recognized in biology or even in mythology.

There is also a fundamental ambiguity in the formulations of this school of thought which seems to me unresolved. Some—like Father Henle, if I understand him—claim that although the subject matter of the philosophy of nature is the same as that of natural science, i.e., corporeal being, the two disciplines, as bodies of knowledge, are autonomous of each other. Perhaps the autonomy is analogous to the autonomy between physics and economics. We can establish the economic laws that determine the *price* of iron independently of the physical laws that determine its electro-magnetic properties and vice versa. Other representatives of the Thomistic philosophy of nature seem to construe the relation between the philosophy of nature and natural science not as one of autonomy but of subordination, the latter to the former. For example, Bonnet asserts in the same article from which I quoted earlier that the philosophy of nature "can direct him (the scientist) in his experimentation and indicate the presence of error" whereas science can be of aid to the philosopher only in providing "further examples of the universal application of philosophical principles. . . ." It is *not* asserted that facts and hypotheses about nature can be "deduced" from philosophical principles or that they can be "founded" on the latter, so that it is difficult to understand by virtue of what knowledge the philosopher of nature is to direct and correct the natural scientist in his work.

In passing it should be noted that the philosophy of dialectical materialism, which is another variant of a philosophy of nature, makes precisely the same claim, with no better grounds, to direct and correct the experimental work of the natural scientist. Any such claim no matter what its source is in fact an arrogant assertion that the philosopher of nature is really a better scientist than the scientist who pursues scientific truth without benefit of the allegedly necessary truths of philosophy. It seems to me that such an assertion is not only false but vicious, for it provides a convenient premise for political and religious restriction of scientific inquiry.

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The most important piece of knowledge allegedly gained by metaphysical rather than scientific method is, of course, the existence of God—most important only if God is conceived as having Personality or Mind. If God lacked Personality or Mind and was just another item in the catalogue of cosmic entities, then no matter how vast its dimensions it would still lack value for man. According to Maritain, whom I quote as representative of a type of thinking, we can have *demonstrative* knowledge that God is an "infinite personality" and "absolute subject." ". . . For we know by certain knowledge, more certain than that of mathematics, that God is simple, one, good, omniscient, all-powerful, free. . . . We are more certain of the divine perfections than of the beating of our own hearts." Since we cannot be certain that any existing thing has any properties unless we are certain that it exists, we must have demonstrative knowledge that God exists.

This calls attention to a fatal ambiguity in the meaning of "demonstrative" and "empirical" in much discussion of the arguments for the existence of God. If "demonstrative" means the use of a deductive method which draws from *a priori* or tautological statements certain implications, then we cannot have demonstrative knowledge of anything but the concepts or meanings of pure logic and mathematics. If one rejects the ontological argument for the existence of God, it is difficult to see how anything can be demonstratively known to exist with a greater certainty than the truths of mathematics. And although under special conditions I can hear the beating of my own heart, I am more certain that "twice three are six" than that "it is my *heart* I hear beating" or that "it is *my* heart that is beating." It is more likely that I may some day be compelled by evidence to withdraw the latter statements than to deny the former one.

If by "empirical" we mean that we start from the facts of experience, then any explanation of these facts which postulates a transcendent cause is arbitrary, because it is a fact of experience that all *other* causal explanations of the phenomena of experience operate within the realm of experience. The finite is explained by the finite, what is in time now by what was in time then, and so on indefinitely. This seems to me to be true independently of the nature of our analysis of the concept of cause, whether we interpret it as a form

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of invariable association and succession or as involving efficacy. The chain of causes, on the basis of the *postulate* that everything has a cause, something *assumed* to be true, extends infinitely into the past and, like the series of negative numbers, may not have a first member. That is to say, even if we admit that everything which comes into existence has a cause, the world may never have come into existence.

If the existence of God is an empirical hypothesis, then any statement about him must have the same contingent and probable character as statements about invisible stars or electrons or any other entity in whose existence we believe on the basis of what is observable but which cannot itself in fact be directly experienced. Thus even if we start from the reported *facts* of mystic experience and from the conviction of the necessity of God's existence, we cannot conclude that God *necessarily* exists.

Now if the existence of God is not causally determined in the way in which science and common sense use the expression "causally determined," and if it is not logically entailed by any fact in the way logical propositions are said to entail each other, what can be meant by saying that God's existence is necessary and how can that fact be established? Father Copleston's recent book on Aquinas grapples boldly with this difficulty. In it he states that in his argument for the existence of God, Aquinas "was asserting a *unique* relation between finite things and the transfinite transcendant cause on which they rest" (my italics).

Now what does it mean to assert that an existential relation is "unique"? Not necessarily that there is *only* one instance of the relation or *many* but that there is *at least one* instance. A unique existential relation between this tree and the apples hanging from it, this man and his children, this pear and its taste requires at least the existence of one apple, one child, one experience of tasting the pear. But in every case the presence of a unique relation is based on a discovery or an experience exhibited by at least one instance. The relation in its uniqueness cannot be like something else. And it cannot be established by argument from canons of general validity. If the relation between finite things and the transfinite cause they depend upon is unique, arguments could never prove it. There would have to be some other way of knowing it even if it were maintained that the relation between finite things and God was uniquely unique or analogically unique.

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We may put the matter another way. According to the position we are examining, reflection on any finite thing encountered in experience reveals that its existence "implies" the existence of an absolutely necessary being. But the existence of no finite thing is itself absolutely necessary. Nonetheless it would still be true to say that no matter what particular finite thing existed, no matter how radically it differed from what is now observable, reflection on it would reveal that its existence "implies" the existence of an absolutely necessary being. No matter what the contingent facts may be, they are said to "imply" not merely a hypothetical but a categorical necessity. An empirical argument starts from contingent premises and results in probable conclusions. A purely rational argument starts from a necessary premise of logic or from a hypothetical assumption and reaches either a formally necessary conclusion or a hypothetically necessary one. However, this particular argument starts from contingent premises and strives to establish a categorically necessary conclusion. It is not a valid empirical argument. It is not a valid rational argument.

The assumptions which are at the basis of this conception of metaphysical knowledge are so far removed from those involved in the theory and practice of modern scientific inquiry that perhaps we should return to the suggestion that we use entirely different vocabularies, to avoid confusion, and insist upon the complete autonomy of metaphysics in relation to science. Not only does history make this difficult, but also those contemporary metaphysicians who regard experimental science as a defective or imperfect kind of philosophy of nature. Consider such a typical attitude as that of V. E. Smith (expressed again in *Philosophical Physics*):

> But how can this procedure (of modern science) meet the classical rigor that a science must be certain, have a knowledge character, and attain to causes? . . . What there is of knowledge proper in emperiological physics is the fruit of philosophy. . . . Truly scientific knowledge can never be purely descriptive since it is only in terms of causes and reasons that science is science.

It is apparent that this school of metaphysical thought cannot let science alone despite its claim that the furthest reaches of science cannot touch it, and that its wisdom is immune to anything the sciences may discover. Because of its animus, the history of science

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in relation to philosophy has been not so much a *conflict between* science and metaphysics (or religion) as a *battle against* science. Nor is it true that science cannot answer questions about the causes and reasons of things. It cannot answer questions about *ultimate* causes and *ultimate* reasons, not because such questions are too difficult to answer or because they require a special organ of vision, but because if an answer to a causal question is intelligible, we can always ask another causal question about it: and if we can give an intelligible reason for the existence of some state of affairs, we can always ask the reason for it. There is no guarantee at any point that we can answer these questions; nor is it certain that we cannot. To speak paradoxically, there are no ultimate questions: only penultimate ones. Those who are dissatisfied with this, despite what they say, really want answers which will explain why things must logically and necessarily be what they are and not something else. They are seeking more than understanding. They are seeking justification and consolation for the order of things. They are seeking what knowledge and science can never give.

Not every conception of philosophical or metaphysical knowledge claims to establish the existence of God, the soul, the angelic hosts, or a philosophical physics superior to an experimental physics in certainty, universality and reliability. But when it does, the burden of proof that there exist other kinds of knowledge besides scientific knowledge rests upon those making the assertion. In justice, it should be said that even some naturalistic philosophers have developed positions according to which metaphysics yields a knowledge forever beyond the jurisdiction of scientific inquiry. For example, the theory of relativity has been characterized by one naturalist philosopher as "scientifically true but ontologically false." This is almost like saying —not quite—that someone is scientifically dead but ontologically alive.

There are, of course, certain conceptions of philosophical knowledge which are not in sharp conflict with the view of knowledge defended here. It is sometimes claimed that philosophical knowledge is as empirical as scientific knowledge but is expressed in broad and vague generalizations that serve as heuristic principles for the special sciences. This is apparently true of some philosophic systems in the

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past but current specialization in the sciences and more rigorous criteria of logical analysis make it unlikely that philosophic systems will play the same fructifying role in the future as in the past.

C. D. Broad's conception of critical philosophy makes it ancillary to scientific and common sense knowledge. "The most fundamental task of Philosophy," says Broad in his *Scientific Thought,* "is to take the concepts that we use in daily common life and science, to analyze them, and thus to determine their precise meanings and their mutual relations." This, as he points out, does not make it a merely verbal discipline unrelated to the ways of things and the patterns of events. On the other hand, speculative philosophy for Broad is exciting and important but of a rather ambiguous cognitive character. It is "Man's final view of the Universe as a Whole, and of the position and prospects of himself and his fellows" in it. In the past Speculative Philosophy has been mostly "moonshine." In the present, it must be based on rigorously exercised Critical Philosophy. In the future it can consist only "at best . . . of more or less happy guesses." And at all times it tends to be unduly influenced by one's liver and bank balance. This is hardly an encouraging view of philosophical knowledge.

Although this is not the place to develop the idea, I wish to mention in conclusion a quite different conception of philosophy, which is at once more modest than the view that philosophical knowledge is "superior" to scientific knowledge and yet more comprehensive than Broad's interpretation of "critical philosophy." To the extent that philosophy is not a substitute or rival of the sciences, or an analysis of the categories, the logic, and the language of the sciences, it is a way of looking at the world, a *Lebensphilosophie,* a theory of criticism, ultimately concerned with the better and worse. Philosophy in this sense is wider and more precious than science because in Dewey's words it is "occupied with meaning rather than with truth." It is not a revelation of the physical or metaphysical structure of the universe but of the "predicaments, protests and aspirations of humanity." It was none other than Dewey who deplored "our lack of imagination in generating leading ideas," and who denied that "the scientifically verifiable" at any moment "provides the content of philosophy." Indeed, "as long as we worship science

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and are afraid of philosophy," he writes, "we shall have no great science." For philosophy is a vision of possibility based on actualities and not determined by them; it reaches beyond fact to values; it exercises "a speculative audacity" in relating values to each other. It must be consistent with the findings of science, but outruns and outreaches at any given moment what we strictly know. It is an informed commitment and an intelligent guide to action on behalf of moral ideals.

THE MONUMENT

At focus in the national park's ellipse a marker
Draws tight the guys of miles, opposite the national
Obelisk with its restless oval peoples who shall be
Drawn deep into its austerities or for a moment
Try the mystery of the god-like eye, before our long
Climb down past relic schoolboy names and states
And one foolish man
Climbs up, his death high in his elliptic face.

John Logan

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Ralph Cohen

PRIVATE EYES AND PUBLIC CRITICS

It has, perhaps, not been sufficiently remarked that the "age of criticism" has coincided with the age of the murder mystery. The period which William Van O'Connor has identified as the half-century of the critical mind and W. K. Wimsatt, Jr. has—with insight—denoted the true age of criticism: this period is also marked by the flourishing of the murder mystery and the rise of the "private eye." These phenomena may seem to the uninitiate unrelated and accidental, but the organic unity of culture accounts for both, and some critics with liberal imagination have attended to both.

Critics such as Joseph Wood Krutch and Jacques Barzun have found in mystery novels the cultural search for security, the probing for justice, and Malcolm Cowley has even suggested that the more recent works exhibit an attack on the American matriarchal social pattern. These critics have also tracked down Faulkner in Yoknapatawpha County, egotism in modern man, and Johnson in the Mitre Tavern. But so far as I know—and to paraphrase Kenneth Burke, I have done my homework here—no critic has yet noticed the underlying structural pattern governing murder mysteries and literary criticism. And the provocative insight is that they both form a single organic art that only in our time has begun to be fused in its original Renaissance function. Indeed no critic has realized the underlying structural resemblance between the tolerance for murder in our mysteries and the pluralism of criticism in our explicators, or, to put it paradoxically, the tolerance for murder in our critics and the pluralism of criticism in our mysteries.

It is perhaps necessary to distinguish murder mysteries from horror stories, thrillers, and ghost stories in order to establish the differentia of the genre. Murder mysteries are characterized by the detective, more symbolically, the "private eye," the death situation, the

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hunt for the evildoer, and the discovery or unveiling of the murderer. The role of the detective is identified by what Eliot has called the "visual imagination." For the term "private eye"—or private "I"—may be seen as the detective's searchlight or the ego-centered neurotic. The private eye fluoroscopes the public cavities or crisis-situations. It must be distinguished from the public eye, which takes in and is taken in by external sense-impressions. As Bassanio says in *The Merchant of Venice,* "the outward shows be least themselves." The symbolic role of the public eye has, of course, its focal locus in *The Great Gatsby,* where on the hell of ashes that is modern life, stands the sign of Dr. T. J. Eckleburg's eyes. Note, too, that when the narrator finds Gatsby, he very significantly sees him floating in the water.

The clash between public and private eyes is merely one indication of the cultural dilemma between seer and seen, I and Thou, individual and society, symbol and myth, critic and author. For the modern critic is himself a private eye—or private ear—depending upon whether he sees with his visual or auditory imagination. The Imagists in their manifesto set the pattern for the critic as private eye, declaring that the function of poetry was to exhibit an image, and, by implication, the role of the critic to identify it. The function of the critic as word-watcher is explained by Blackmur: "It consists, first, in being willing to concentrate your maximum attention upon the work which the words and the motions of the words—and by motions I mean all the technical devices of literature—perform upon each other." The critic who watches the work, the motions, the gestures of language, what is he but a "private eye"?

And the term" private eye" for critics is more appropriate than seems immediately apparent. Not merely because the critic tracks language and its motions, or because language is somnambulant and every recognition a reversal, not even because "private" insists on the recondite and personal and secret observation of the critic, but because "private" has a public connotation. For in our culture "private" is a substantive as well as an adjective, and, as a result of the development of militarism, "private" has a status meaning. It represents that group of the army which is most populous and most anonymous. In that sense the term "private eye" exhibits the tension between public anonymity and private "I" and gives to criticism the tug of paradoxical energies.

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This used not to be the case. Criticism and mystery stories were once identical and the pattern of this is clear in *Oedipus Rex,* in which, as Francis Fergusson has shown in his subtle and learned essay, Oedipus is a detective seeking his own self, and, one may perhaps be permitted to add, Tiresias performs the function of the literary critic. "I see," he says to Oedipus, "that even your own words miss the mark." But Oedipus, hostile to organic unity, does not realize that blindness has made the critic more seeing, more perceptive. It is only when Oedipus recognizes that the true critic must wound himself, must carry the stigmata of the artist *manqué,* that he comes with full perception to his destiny. This interpretation is not, of course, meant to deny that *Oedipus* is an oral play whose theme is the genital attachment of the son to the female parent, but merely to suggest that an emphasis on its anal qualities can illumine the mythic problem of literary criticism. It is when Oedipus blinds himself that he, too, becomes possessed by the "private" or inward eye, thus establishing the mythic pattern of detective and literary critic.

The dissociation of critic and detective (or critical detectibility) took place in the eighteenth century as a result of the decline of religious feeling brought about by the Reformation and the rise of the English middle class. This phenomenon can be seen at work in *Moll Flanders* and *Jonathan Wild,* for example, in which villains are attacked in the interludes and advanced in the narrative. This period, which exhibited a relaxation of literary forms and the development of new prose styles, also exhibited a new laxity in literary criticism. The analysis of particular works, for which Aristotle set the model, ceased to be followed, and Longinus' sublime poet supplemented Aristotle's maker. Thus criticism grew more personal, more "psychological," and became uncritical of the weak conception of evil in eighteenth-century literature. This is apparent in the literature of the outlaw—in *The Beggar's Opera,* for example, in which justice is seen in terms of the informer's daughter rather than the informer, the adherence to it a form of sex behavior.

The widest gap between literary criticism and murder mysteries appeared in the nineteenth century with the breakdown of Christianity. In Poe, in whom we can trace the literary movement of separation of sound and sense in poetry, we can perhaps also see the separate functions of literary critic and detective analyst. In his inductive com-

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ments on Hawthorne, and in his deductive comments on the composition of *The Raven,* he reveals the two methods of the literary critic and applies them in *The Murders in the Rue Morgue.* But the rationality of Dupin, his inductive gathering of detail and his deductive inferences, his need to repress his childhood experiences and to exalt his ego by success, indicate that he is—what D. H. Lawrence called Poe—one of "these terribly conscious birds." He fails in his detection to recognize that there are more perspectives than one, and, in his hunt for the murderer, he never once recognizes the true cultural dilemma, that the Ourang-Outang is the uncontrolled imagination of disaster and the prefect the absolutely controlled—even constipated—reason. But Dupin does not unite both in artistic vision, and in his failure, he, too, is duped. "As regards the more important knowledge," he says, "I do believe that she is invariably superficial." Dupin refuses to become committed, *engagé.* And his discovery of the Ourang-Outang stems not from his understanding of human behavior but of animal behavior. He represents not the critic aware of evil, but, as Poe says, the "diseased intelligence."

In our time, the work of T. S. Eliot as literary critic and murder mystery writer (I suggest that *Murder in the Cathedral* needs to be re-evaluated) has sought to unify the dissociation of critical detectivity. The symptoms of this movement can be seen in Raymond Chandler's *The Long Goodbye,* in which the private eye, Philip Marlow, commenting upon a work by a historical novelist, declares, "I thought it [his work] was tripe." Chandler, who has also written criticism, has declared of the private eye that he must be a man of high moral values, incorruptible when the chippies are down. In other words, modern criticism has made clear that the very structure of the detective novel must be studied in order to grasp procedures practiced by critics.

One of the characteristic structural patterns is the hunt. The private eye is called in to find the murderer and after a series of hair-raising alternatives finally apprehends him. This form, which involves several false confrontations before the true one, is an exhibition of what in criticism is called "perspectivism" or "pluralism." "Pluralism" recognizes that there is a diversity in approaches to literature, and "perspectivism" recognizes that literature, though one

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thing, is developing, changing and full of possibilities. One might compare this technique to that in the morality play in which Everyman, for example, confronts diverse possibilities before recognizing the right one. What in the murder mystery is accepted as a democratic urge for murder is seen in criticism as the necessary acceptance of diversity. If in the first all men are capable of murder, in criticism it is a matter of point of view. Though some points of view are better than others, it depends very much on what one wishes to see. And voyeurism is no more reprehensible than looking for archetypes.

The role of the hunt in the structure of murder novels describes the detective as a man driven to murder, assuming the traits of the man he seeks. The hunter adopts to a considerable extent the ways of the animal he is hunting; thus the wolf in the folk tale adopts the ways of the human child in hunting the grandmother. Just as Sam Spade in *The Maltese Falcon* has to kill off a number of men and become as tough as the woman he is seeking, so the critic, when confronted with lines like

> *Chieftain Iffucan of Azcan in caftan*
> *Of tan with henna hackles, halt!*

must assume some of the cryptic quality of the poet, declaring, "Mr. Stevens' rhetoric is as ferociously comic as the rhetoric in Marlowe's *Jew of Malta,* and as serious."

The strategy of the hunt exhibits not only the reversibility of roles, but the tension which the hunt creates among the possible victims. There is the development of neuroses among the possible victims, who are threatened not only by the murderer but also by the detective. "We are all in this together" is a not uncommon situation in the detective novel. But its significance for criticism has not been noticed. For critics who welcome diversity have an uncanny facility in resisting it. Thus the analysis of poems exhibits critics climbing on the backs of Shakespeare, Donne, Yeats, and Keats and in general analyzing the poems which someone has already analyzed. "Ode on a Grecian Urn" has had 21 analyses, whereas Johnson's "London" has yet to be explicated. This critical phenomenon exhibits the neurosis of a threatened society. One's safety is gauged by the number of people who think a shelter is sound, or perhaps one's safety depends upon the number of people even less safe than oneself—the number of critics one can prove wrong.

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This tolerance for shooting one's fellow-critic must be understood as a reaction against nineteenth-century romanticism. It was Shelley who declared in *Adonais*—if I may be permitted a paraphrase—that the critics poisoned and shot Keats. This ridiculous assumption—for how indeed could they have done both—emphasized the dichotomy which previously existed between author and critic. For if we look upon *Adonais* as a hunt poem, we realize that Shelley identifies himself with the slain hero, while at the same time refusing the consequences of this position: namely death. The inconsistency in his change of person from "his" to "her" in stanza XXV is paralleled by an artistic inconsistency which is revealed to be a moral failure, a failure of nerve. The conflict between author and critic is endemic to romanticists like Shelley, who fail to grasp experience imaginatively and is in contrast to Keats, for example, who sought to learn from his critics—if only he had lived long enough to truly profit from them—or Coleridge, who became a critic himself.

In Coleridge we find the model of the modern critic, the poet who purged himself by criticism. Having written poetry and gradually succumbed to opium, criticism was for him a purgative, and his quarrel with the criticism of Wordsworth is, as some of our critics have brilliantly seen, the beginning of the modern movement in criticism, the triumph of the primary imagination over the inconsistent Shelleyan fancy. The quarrel with Wordsworth, governed as it was by personal feeling, did not exhibit the true disinterest which is a part of modern criticism. This disinterest is apparent in F. R. Leavis' discussion of one of his essays. Leavis writes: "I conduct the argument very carefully and in terms of particular analysis, and I cannot see that Dr. Wellek makes any serious attempt to deal with it." Or, as another critic says of an analysis by William Empson: "Such a passage as this needs only attentive reading to make manifest its utter absurdity; but then that very absurdity in a fashion protects it, and gains a certain credence for it; it is so absurd that we in a measure believe it, merely because we are loath to believe that anything could be so absurd."

The attention of the critics to one another is a form of attraction and repulsion, the ambivalent behavior, to which Freud called our attention, that is a familiar device in the hunt—the binding together of the anxiety-ridden characters in order to achieve a com-

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mon end. Thus the thieves in *The Maltese Falcon* seek to win the detective to their end. Critics, therefore, in addition to shooting at each other, combine to avoid extinction. All things, we know, are either what they are or some other thing. And critical hostility is also critical respect and the theories of pluralism are safety nets to protect the critics from posterity.

This need to protect critics from posterity is also implicit, strangely enough, in the technique of the murder mystery. For the murder mystery must insist upon the ambiguity of fact; one man's fact is another man's escape. The airtight alibi that goes flat, the suicide behind locked doors whose weapon was in the wrong hand—these have demonstrated that facts are slippery and that the senses deceive. The kind and gentle girl to whom the detective becomes attached, the little sister with the big revolver, these facts have insisted on the rejection of authority. People do not do what they ought and facts do not behave as they should. The detective must seek by guile to make the criminal reveal himself; he must, as Polonius said, "by indirections find directions out."

Hamlet can serve as one type of the model critic-detective when he assumes an antique disposition to hunt down a murderer. For he functions not only as detective but as literary critic, choosing the play and even writing the lines which are to catch the conscience of the king. Hamlet is a detective concerned with the psychology of the audience, in contrast to Porfiry Petrovitch in *Crime and Punishment,* who is concerned with the mind of the criminal or author of the crime. This term, "author of the crime," ought not to be overlooked, for it is an implied metaphor of criminal as author, clarifying among its tenors the role of the literary detective as apprehender of the author.

The detective who had only one approach—his apogee was Sherlock Holmes—was an example of the authoritarian personality prepared to deal with the criminal on an individual basis like medieval combat. But the modern detective, like the modern critic, uses all that is usable and the approach from diverse perspectives finally provides the detective critic with the criminal. The detective flirts with the suspects in order to test them (as Milton says, "I cannot praise a fugitive and cloistered virtue, unexercised and unbreathed"), but he finally alights upon the true one. In the murder there is always

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the discovery—the recognition scene, or, as Aristotle indicates, the peripeteia—but in criticism the unveiling of the proper perspective is often embarrassing, because although the literary work can be assaulted, it cannot be conquered. Critics have, therefore, quite properly denominated the work as "recalcitrant," "incomplete," "difficult," "continually changing," or fickle—full of guises or disguises.

Of the alternatives available to critics, the return to the authoritarianism of Horace is forbidden. The howlers in that famous treatise on poetry are with wisdom carefully avoided. Horace ridiculed such combinations as tragedy and comedy and declared that they would be as grotesque as the body of a horse with the head of a man. But although Horace never saw the paintings of Picasso nor the plays of Shakespeare, he might at least have avoided commitments for the future. His authoritarianism is attributed to his empiricism—he described what he knew; but did he know what he described? One critic's empiricism is another critic's dogmatism; and the pluralistic doors must be kept open.

Nevertheless it must not be assumed that pluralism is relativism. Between authoritarianism and relativism exists the proper area of critical value: the concrete universals, the materialistic essences, the collective ideology of which all critics are parts and none of them wholes, the area between mind and art, head and hand. It is a solution which the mystery novel had prepared for us, but which it took an analytic philosopher to make clear. For, as Margaret Macdonald has shown, true criticism is really a form of art itself. The function of the critic is not to decide value, but to exhibit it, to fuse the detective story with literary criticism, to return to that unity which has been lost since the Renaissance, the unity of critical detectibility.

This is, after all, the direction in which modern criticism has been moving, and the suggestion is a dual one. On the one hand, murder mysteries such as *The Long Goodbye* could use a more cogent critical vocabulary. When the detective declares, "I thought it was tripe," he could perhaps substitute vegetable for animal metaphors, conveying a more organic assertion. And in works of criticism dealing with concrete analysis, the critics might recognize themselves as the audience to which Eliot referred when asked about the meaning of *The Confidential Clerk*: "I want the audience to make up its own mind."

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Some critics have begun to exhibit that inward or private eye which marked the redeemed Oedipus, and, having seen into the life and death of literature, have announced the archetypal critical motifs: the clash of plot tensions, the ambiguity of the word, the immorality of inconsistency, the heresy of paraphrase, the threat of inorganic unity, the sacramental imagination. The very titles of their books announce the trend: *The Wheel of Fire, The Double Agent, Maule's Curse, The Armed Vision.* Beyond *Oedipus* and *Hamlet* lies the domain of the critical detectives.

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James Dickey

THE SWIMMER

The river stands, a shadow balanced open.
I stand. My skull makes a motion of closing
Over stems, between upward and downward—
Closed, it is pressed white
Listening to thirst graze formally among its vectors,
And lifted down, and the girl,
Each muscle of her body near a voice
Plucked and set beating harp-metal by the wedged sun
Between leaves and strings,
Falls from the opposite bank.

Toward the swinging paint of her shadow
Paired with a tongue that might be arched
And caught forever singing out
The dead intensity of the river
From the sleep of a blue mouth, brightening,
Yet is all sidling silence,

My head dips past its print, and the flesh goes,
And my eyes through the river's rain
(A wall burned gently from its nails) pass
From sun to moon: from sun to moon
Light of nausea, her hair dancing
Under the day-moth's dancing
Small step of suspension,
Ceases to shape back,

And under the water where I have loved
I touch it with the echo of my face,

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And feel my legs, tuned to the river's magnet, follow,
Hum solid, changingly, like urns struck hard
Being filled, and light from the porch of a headless god
Binds down the trees of the abyss.

Behind my throat, a Presence
Is hooded out with bones, is trembling with whiteness
As white as the bones, between the bones:
In that dry, sparkling field under daylight,
Under the half-watered air

Of the strangling swimmer,
The current throws scars from the heart of lightning
Into the Hunt, and I leap
Up the branched channels of a vertical wind.
Death flickers light and broken: the thickets stream:
Above, her legs are shattering right, she pulls:
Form and Vigor
Tear out her saliva and rope it to the banks.
A hound passes its tongue through my shoulder—
My horns lift him, he staggers, his legs flail
The dancing sun of water, and I stand, at last,
In hiding, my antlers tuned to the dark of the wood,
And the sprinters with their lances pass,
Cleansed with young steam and honey,
As she beats back panic through the slow, clear wall:

Where my new, flowing flesh stares up,
She flogs toward the bush of the drinking deer
Whose stripped shadow under the stream, moveless,
Ceremonial, hung with dead leaves and dry
Sparkling, carbon and moonlight,
Draws with his patient gaze
Her lines of force from the spring
To the sea, through her nipples,
And through the kick of her arms
His stone ear runs and runs
Over the whole river, and a wheel
Meshes emptily there, with colorless flowers.

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I feel at my brow the sleeping deaf
Press their violent foreheads up
To touch her, sowing greatly, in the lungs.
And as the crest of her geometry fires
And falls over the river, and vanishes into a bird
As she walks out, the lances of the sprinters,
The foam of the deer

Float unimaginably still. Tradition holds her safe,
Though we who made it,
The hunters and the hunted in her form,
Seethe in the current, cold, and things touch us:
My great eyes look at me from the air,
And I set my powerful, numb head

And hold through my stone ribs
The water carefully, but where she slept
Is past. I am stiller and not leaping
Back to my face and body rained to death
By the sun, where the spiritless eyes no longer
Are vacant, but know: her naked walking shakes them,
But onto me like no leaf
Falls, in the perfect gloom and body

Of the dark faultless field where shadows move
The forms of darkness dazzlingly,
And take no body back, that ever comes
To touch the bones of his bestial face
To the murmuring wall, late after love.
Turn back: stare in, through the multiple heart
Of proven water. Let your throat re-form.
God sheds the cloth of air.
Silence turns its following weight
Mindless, to rest Him freshly in the leaves.
Helen! Incorruptible extreme!
We have the blue eyes of prisoners.

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K. A. Jelenski

THE DILEMMA OF THE POLISH INTELLECTUALS

The Polish intelligentsia today is in a unique situation. Its rebellion, unlike that of the Hungarian intellectuals (the course of which François Fejtö analyzed in PR's Winter 1957 issue), has been successful, it has become emancipated, but, as a result of a combination of exceptional circumstances, it has remained within the Communist bloc and the Communist ideology. Polish writers and intellectuals have remained Communists for "reasons of state" which the entire nation understands instinctively, and now they are deciding what Communism is. Questions are being raised, not just within their own narrow intellectual circles, but in literary magazines, in cultural weeklies, and in public lectures; out of the discussion a new phenomenon is emerging—Gomulkism.

The Polish writers rebelled against a factitious ideological commitment. But they did not retreat into a literary Arcadia or into any ivory tower of art for art's sake. For their rebellion was itself an ideological commitment—this time a sincere one, and one freely chosen. "We lied, we pledged ourselves morally to a gigantic lie encompassing the whole of life"—this is what the Polish writers must be saying to themselves. The act of turning against this lie must also have bearing upon the whole of life. The poets, novelists, essayists, and playwrights who put their work at the service of a lie that contaminated all of existence cannot return to their personal themes: they have become moralists, sociologists, economists, political theorists. With a Central Committee and a government busy solving a thousand urgent problems, compelled to take a pragmatic attitude and suspicious of ideological constructions that get in the way of action, the intellectuals in Poland have again assumed their favorite role—that of transforming the incredible confusion of life into something legible and intelligible.

The Communists in control in the Soviet Union and the vassal Communists of the West are watching this process with trepidation. In their world, where everything, from a governmental decision to an occasional verse printed in a provincial newspaper, has to fit into a necessary, logical scheme, an interpretation of existence that admits of multiplicity and divergences seems shocking.

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Their uneasiness is understandable enough. It is of course aroused chiefly by those Polish writers who continue to believe or to say they are Communists. Other writers, apolitical ones or Catholics, express their own ideologies without being questioned, provided they find their place in the building of a Socialist Poland. I am speaking here only of the intellectual "Left," which formed the vanguard of the October revolution. But this group—in itself, and as an image of the Polish Communist party as a whole—represents a kind of microcosm of the nation.

The ideological position of these Polish writers and intellectuals who call themselves "Communists" is similar to that of Silone, Koestler, Edmund Wilson, or Stephen Spender. Some of them are even expressing pragmatic tendencies, in which ideologies are subordinated to considerations of efficiency—ideas which in the West would generally be considered Rightist, and which fall somewhere between the views of Raymond Aron and Peter Wiles, on the one hand, and Jules Monnerot and James Burnham on the other. If *The God that Failed* were being reissued today, suitable contributions to the symposium would be found among the recent writings of almost every Leftist Polish writer. Western Communist writers are expelled from the party for lesser heresies.

The Polish Communist intellectuals do not confine themselves to denouncing the so-called cult of the individual. In Stalinism they see, not merely the "necessary evil" that Deutscher, and the Western fellow travelers as well, found it, but evil pure and simple—or, in the words of *Po Prostu* ("Plain Talk"), the most genuinely revolutionary weekly in Poland, "the greatest piece of cheating in the history of the working class." Thus, within a doctrine that postulates a historical teleology, they effect a cleavage that cannot be reconciled with orthodoxy. But where, for the same offense, Western Communists were driven out of the party, the Polish Communists have remained within it—and it is their party that controls the government. The Western Communist intellectuals, once they were rejected by the party, slandered and charged with treason, generally followed a path that led them farther and farther away from Communism. Repelled by Stalin's methods, they discovered that it was Leninism that had made possible the establishment of such tyranny, and ended by rejecting Marxism because Leninism and Stalinism were its historical embodiments. The Polish intellectuals are following an entirely different path. Instead of seeking truth, justice, and morality outside their ideology, they are endeavoring to expand their ideology to include these things. If Communism has assumed monstrous historical forms—well, then it must be redefined. . . .

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In the days of Stalin the doctrine was applied universally. Science, literature, art—everything was subordinated to politics. Now party dogmatism has been definitively abolished. One of its last flare-ups was actually self-destructive: even before Gomulka's accession to power, Leszek Kolakowski, the most brilliant young Polish Marxist, wrote—in the September 1956 issue of *Nowe Drogi* ("New Roads"), the party's theoretical organ—that since Marxism represents the truth, and since human reason will always be automatically drawn toward the truth, the most complete intellectual freedom cannot possibly do any harm. This freedom manifests itself today in a somewhat melancholy skepticism on the part of those who were once the most ardent believers. For instance, the young Communist writer J. Bochenski says:

> Communism was once for me a universal system, a system of knowledge, ethics, and organization. It showed me how to judge all phenomena, how to act under any circumstances. . . . What is left of it? Not much, for it is universal no longer. In fact I no longer have confidence in universalism as such. I no longer yearn for an all-encompassing doctrine. If such a doctrine makes Prometheuses of us, it is not because it enables us to steal fire from the gods, but because it chains us to a rock. (*Przeglad Kulturalny* ("Cultural Review"), No. 38, 1956.)

Needless to say, the Stalinist version of Marxism-Leninism is rejected: according to *Po Prostu* "it was not Marxist and did not represent Marxism." While continuing to profess respect for Marxism, the Polish Communist intellectuals insist that it "should be subject to the same methods of control and scientific verification as any other discipline: we must continually test it in the light of reality, revise it, develop it. . . ." (*Po Prostu,* No. 48, 1956).

The Polish Marxists have already embarked on a critique of Marxism that would not surprise us if it came from Sidney Hook. The building of socialism, they point out, did not take place under the conditions foreseen by Marx, i.e., in the face of a fully developed capitalism, but rather in economically underdeveloped countries. This leads to the rejection of a number of theses that only yesterday were Marxist dogma —the law of the progressive impoverishment of the working class under capitalism, the Marxist theory of economic depressions, the theory of the socialist revolution, all the ideas on the mechanism of power in Communist-governed countries, on the role of imperialism, on the significance of technological progress. What the Polish intellectuals continue to regard as valid in Marxism is essentially only that part of it which has been incorporated into most modern sociological and economic theories; what remains is, as M. Czerwinski said recently in

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Przeglad Kulturalny, "a method that enables us to analyze the conditions of economic and cultural development."

The main concern of the Polish intellectuals thus appears to be to secure for themselves elbow room and a free intellectual approach within a view of the world that they continue to call Communist or Marxist. Are they using this approach deliberately, out of consideration for their political and geographical dilemma? Whether they are or not, the approach is a sound one, for it has the effect of insuring Poland as much personal and intellectual freedom, justice and social equality as can possibly be achieved under the present conditions.

The situation of Poland is amazingly paradoxical. So long as she stays within the Communist camp, so long as she does not ask for neutrality and free elections, she can pursue with impunity policies of internal independence and democratization which naturally represent a threat of contamination to the Soviet Union itself. But though the Soviet leaders may denounce indirectly the "dangers" of the Polish experiment, as Khrushchev has done recently, they are compelled to tolerate it and even to condone it, publicly, lest the breach in the Communist bloc assume irreparable proportions. The Russians realize that large-scale repression in Poland might embroil them in a war with a medium-sized power equipped with twenty divisions and producing eighty Migs a year, and that this would deal a mortal blow to the prestige of Communism, and might even lead to a world conflict. But this impunity in Poland is nevertheless restricted, and can continue only as long as the government is controlled by Gomulka, that is to say, a national Communist, and only if a majority of the population supports this government. To retain the support of a population 95 per cent of which is anti-Communist and anti-Soviet and at the same to remain fixed in an ideology acceptable to the Communist bloc—such is Gomulka's difficult task, if he wants Poland to avoid the fate of Hungary, or to frustrate a return of the Stalinists (possibly disguised as ultra-nationalists).

An important group of "democratic Communist" writers has aided Gomulka in his fight against the Stalinists, publishing chiefly in three cultural and social weeklies—*Nowa Kultura, Przeglad Kulturalny,* and the organ of the Communist youth, *Po Prostu.* These writers contributed in large measure to Gomulka's victory at the Central Committee meeting of October, 1956. They identified themselves with the October revolution, and in their attempts to define its significance they came

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to look upon themselves as the real "vanguard of the working class." They have even begun to elaborate the theoretical bases of their movement, developing in the process a humanistic and pragmatic *Weltanschauung,* the main features of which can be summed up as follows, on the basis of their writings:

The Utopian conception of Communism, according to which all sacrifices were justified for the sake of a mythical future, is emphatically rejected. Socialism must be judged according to its contribution to the present: "We have certain obligations to the Communist idea, the Communist movement. . . . But we are more concerned with the fate of our nation, the fate of these millions of men, ill fed, ill clothed, overworked, who have hoped for social justice" (M. Gornicki, *Sztandar Mlodych* ("The Banner of Youth"), Nov. 24, 1956).

This refusal to sacrifice the present generation on the altar of some utopian future is coupled with the rejection of the teleological view of history. In a view of history that conceives of the present only *sub specie futuri,* says Jan Kott, "everything that speeds up the historical process is regarded as progress, and everything that slows it down, as reaction. We have here a kind of bed of Procrustes. History must be tortured to force it to produce the next stage as quickly as possible" (*Przeglad Kulturalny,* No. 36, 1956).

The direction the historical process was to take was formerly determined by the interests of the Soviet Union. By acting in the interests of the Soviets, one speeded up the course of history, and the extent of a given country's progress toward socialism was measured by the degree to which it corresponded to the Soviet archetype. But to the Polish writers of today, independence and national sovereignty seem not only compatible with the building of socialism, but an indispensable condition for it; there are many roads leading to socialism, and these can vary according to place and time: "There will be no socialism in Poland if there is no national sovereignty. Restrictions on sovereignty do not bring socialism closer, but on the contrary paralyze its development" (J. Bochenski, *Przeglad Kulturalny,* No. 43, 1956).

The pragmatic approach is thus set over against the dogmatic approach. In the Stalinist era facts and experience did not count, any more than the consequences of a given decision, so long as the decision was "correct" from a doctrinal standpoint. Now Gomulka's appeal to an empirical approach is echoed by most intellectuals. "In the course of our lives we have had to memorize two different catechisms. Today we reject all canons and versicles, all Holy Bibles and Unholy Bibles.

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We have hands and brains, we want to build socialism in Poland—build it, not imagine it in terms of dogmas" (B. Drozdowski, *Zycie Literackie* ("Literary Life"), No. 44, 1956).

The Polish intellectuals do not confine themselves to rejecting dogmatism: they criticize specific dogmas. The *Po Prostu* group attacks the whole view of man as a "productive element" used to serve "the impersonal economic interests of the state." They point out that socialism becomes meaningless if the fate of the individual is ignored. They also point out the fundamental fallacy in thinking "that the nationalization of the means of production provided a sufficient basis for creating a socialist attitude toward work, a new socialist morality, a new internal discipline. . . . Everything that contradicted these presumptions was accounted for by the survival of a petty-bourgeois mentality. . . . But the expropriation of the bourgeoisie does not of itself transform the minds of men. The workers will respond only to the whole complex of measures embodied in labor legislation, in the organization of production, and of social life in the factories" (*Nowa Kultura,* No. 29, 1956).

It is worth noting here that Polish economists and intellectuals in general had from the outset advocated the system of workers' councils in the industries. This has affected the economic program of Gomulka's Poland: industry will not be denationalized, but its organization will be decentralized, with most of the decisions being made at the factory level. The purpose of this is to create almost independent industrial units that will be as flexible as but less aggressive than the corresponding capitalist units: they will determine their own production quotas and set their own prices in a market that is to become progressively freer. The workers' councils will have a voice in decisions—this is only natural considering the part some of them played in the October revolution. These moves will put an end to forced industrialization and programs of excessive investment. In agriculture, forced collectivization will be replaced by genuinely voluntary cooperation, as, for instance, in the kinds of farming where machines are used.[1] The crops will be sold in the free market, and compulsory deliveries will be abolished.

The Polish intellectuals, including even some young Polish economists, regard this economic program as a panacea. It is interesting to note that certain of its elements (the workers' councils) were borrowed

1. The first stages of decollectivization brought certain surprises. Contrary to expectations, it was not the members of the poorer collective farms who decided to disband, but those of the more prosperous ones—for only the latter had sufficient livestock and machinery to divide up among themselves.

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by the Poles from what they thought was the actual practice in Yugoslavia. But the Poles, so long cut off from Yugoslavia, could not have known that Tito's workers' councils existed only on paper. We have here a curious historical phenomenon: the influence of a myth on which Stalin's condemnation of Tito had conferred the prestige of reality.

Up until the January elections the intellectuals speaking in the name of the party's "democratic left" were Gomulka's most reliable and useful allies. Their passionate appeals, the hopes they voiced, the complete freedom with which they discussed the thorniest questions contributed a great deal to the overwhelming vote of confidence the Poles gave Gomulka. But Gomulka's internal policies reflect the dilemma I have mentioned above. To preserve his recently acquired independence of the Soviet Union, he must combat his worst enemies, the Polish Stalinists; but he must combat them in a subtle way, as tactfully as possible. It seems that each step toward greater autonomy must be balanced by a concession to those Polish Communists who enjoy the Kremlin's real confidence, and each measure that decreases the power of the Stalinists must be balanced by "warnings" addressed to the most "reformist" Communists—that is, principally, the intellectuals.

In the months preceding October, 1956, the Natolin group, as the Polish Stalinists are called, sought popular support by promising to raise the standard of living by 50 per cent (instead of the 30 per cent aimed at by Gomulka)—a gratuitous and unrealizable pledge, and by promising to effect a purge along racist, anti-Semitic lines, in the party leadership and the administration. The Stalinists made a rapid comeback after their defeat in October. True, the replacements in the government line-up as a result of the October revolution led to other shake-ups, in the ministries, in all the administrative departments. In the plants, the workers rid themselves of their Stalinist managers by putting them in wheelbarrows and transporting them outside. A whole class of "has-beens" was created in Poland—bureaucrats who had suddenly lost their jobs, their high salaries, their apartments, cars, secretaries. But it may be said without exaggeration that the democratization of the Communist world would be greatly facilitated if the executioners of yesterday could be guaranteed not merely impunity but also sinecures. The Poles know from their history how dangerous a social group whose material interests make it dependent on Russia can be. At the end of the eighteenth century the feudal lords forming the Targowica Confederation, frightened by the agitation for reform that was to result

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in the constitution of May 3, 1791, offered their services to Catherine the Great, and the partition of Poland was largely due to their intrigues. The Soviet ambassador in Warsaw today plays a part similar to that played by Repnin, the Czarina's envoy to the court of Stanislas Augustas. The "former" Stalinists are gathered around him. Only a few executioners of the political police, Tozanski for instance, have been imprisoned. Others lost their jobs. But a number of Stalinists have retained their posts in the ministries and in the factories. It is the latter—who still exert real influence—that the Natolin group is trying to organize into a body whose tasks will be to foment discontent by taking advantage of the economic crisis to remind the population of their own promises to raise the standard of living; to undermine confidence in the present leaders by emphasizing their "Stalinist" past; to exploit the anti-Semitism that is deep-rooted in the Polish populace, directing it primarily against the intellectuals and militants of Jewish extraction who were in the vanguard of the fight against Stalinism in Poland.

It is of course easy, in Poland as in Hungary, to hurl the charge of "Stalinist" at Communists who opposed the party line only between 1949 and 1956. A striking illustration of this is provided by certain difficulties that took place in the Warsaw party committee. The secretary of this committee, Staszewski, had contributed greatly to the success of the October revolution. He was one of the men who had alerted the population overnight, and distributed arms to the workers' committees; and he had supplied bodyguards for Gomulka before the Central Committee meeting. After the October revolution some of his colleagues accused him of being a Stalinist, and a bureaucrat. This was before the January elections, and Gomulka's personal intervention saved him. But hardly a month after the elections, Gomulka, now secure in his position, forced Staszewski to resign. The political game often involves such bargains. No Stalinists hold key posts in the new Council of State or in the new government. Yet Zenon Nowak, one of the leaders of the Natolin group and a sworn enemy of Gomulka, who in the course of the seventh meeting of the Central Committee, in July 1956, had openly put forward anti-Semitic slogans at the prompting of Khrushchev, has retained his post of Deputy Premier. It is true that he has no actual power. But it is the intellectuals who feel most strongly the effects of Gomulka's realistic policies. The writer Leon Kruczkowski, author of *Julius and Ethel,* a wretched melodrama based on the tragedy of the Rosenbergs, the man whom the poet Jastrun has recently called "the last social-realist of Poland," and who was forced to yield the presidency of the Writers' Union to the liberal Antoni Slonimski, has

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been made a member of the Council of State. And the first directive the Central Committee addressed to the party authorities after the elections proclaimed the necessity to fight on two fronts—against the Stalinists and against the "anarchistic-minded" elements among the intelligentsia.

It cannot be said that the general tone of the Polish literary press has changed, in the face of these warnings. But the party leadership has restored to censorship the authority it had lost. Needless to say, it is no longer the old Stalinist censorship: it is inspired by strategic rather than ideological considerations. It no longer portrays itself as the instrument of a dogma, but as a manifestation of prudence required for "reasons of state." (There is a joke about this in Warsaw: What is the difference between Yugoslavia and Poland? In Yugoslavia it is permitted to attack the Soviet Union but never Yugoslavia, while in Poland you are free to attack Poland, but never the Soviet Union.) The little Torquemadas have thus been transformed into little Machiavellis. There is often even a certain complicity between the journalist or writer and the censor, the latter pretending that he shares the view to which he forbids publication under the pretext of safeguarding its potential future. Nevertheless, this censorship, as is always the case, generates an instinctive self-censorship in the writer. Thus a new conformism is taking shape, one that is subtle and difficult to define. There is no question in Poland of a return to Stalinism, nor even of imposing a uniform theory of Polish "socialism." In a totalitarian state, the writer's problem is a simple one: either he continues to write, giving himself body and soul to the dictatorship, or he is silent at his own risk and peril. But Poland is no longer a totalitarian state. "I think that we are moving toward a leftist *Sanacja*," a Polish writer told me recently, referring to the authoritarian pre-war Polish government that succeeded Pilsudski. It is quite difficult to find the "right tone," even for a born conformist, in an authoritarian country governed by a single party, which is within the Communist bloc, and which nevertheless avails itself of freedom of expression.

The truth is that the Polish intellectual Left is in a particularly difficult situation. On the one hand, it runs the risk of being disavowed by the regime it helped to establish. On the other hand, it is a target for continual attacks from Polish Catholic, nationalist, and anti-Semitic reactionaries, whom the government and the party try to spare and to conciliate for strategic and demagogic reasons. The recent agreement between the Gomulka government and the Church is certainly welcome;

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but the Polish clergy is often narrow-minded, nationalistic, bigoted, and anti-Semitic. It has recently emerged victorious from a period of persecution, and is bent upon consolidating its position, which seems to be stronger today than it was in pre-war Poland, a predominantly secular state despite its reputation for virulent Catholicism. The party leaders have often turned to local priests, recently, for help in getting strikers back to work; the clerics were able to exert authority when all other forces had been discredited. Now, even though the Polish intellectual Left is not stupidly anti-clerical or atheistic, it has already clashed on several points with the Catholic majority of the population—which followed the intellectuals in voting overwhelmingly for Gomulka.

One of the main issues in this conflict was created by the re-establishment of religious training in the schools. What is in question is not the principle itself, but the practical consequences of this measure for children of agnostic or Jewish parents. Religion was for so long the refuge of freedom in Poland, the most accessible method of protest during the years of Stalinist terror, that a kind of anti-conformist conformism developed among the children, probably due to the influence of the majority of parents. Even under Stalinism a kind of "moral terror" was beginning to be felt in the schools: children who failed to attend religious classes in the parishes were frowned upon. One of my friends, a famous agnostic writer, a kind of Polish Colette, told me that her grand-daughter had three years ago forced her to go through the motions of taking communion, threatening to commit suicide if Grandma refused. "I, who never took communion, not even before 1914!" said this woman, who was brought up in a progressive milieu, at a time when religion was still a matter of choice, though it was fashionable and looked upon with approval. Today, children who declare that their parents do not wish them to have religious training are subject to real maltreatment, and anti-Semitism plays a considerable part in this development.

Anti-Semitism should have been discredited by the very fact that it was part of the Stalinist program, and by the report, persistent though almost impossible to verify, that it was directly inspired by Khrushchev. But unfortunately it seems to be the one Soviet influence that continues to have force in Poland, no doubt because the ground there is traditionally favorable to it. It is frightening to learn that one of the mass student organizations formed after Gomulka's accession to the government demanded the establishment of a *numerus clausus* for Jewish students.

The Polish reactionaries have taken over the heritage of stupidity,

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vulgarity, prudishness, and chauvinism that was cultivated by Stalinism. Internationalism, which Stalinism combated with pseudo-patriotic clichés, is looked upon with just as much suspicion by the reactionary chauvinists. Legal abortion and the spread of information on birth control—the latter a necessity in a country as poor and as overpopulated as Poland—were attacked, before Gomulka, in the name of a Marxist anti-Malthusianism; today they are the targets of all the Catholic forces. Yesterday erotic themes, and sexual realism in painting and literature were forbidden by the censorship—today, it is the public that protests against them, in the name of a need to preserve "the dignity of Polish mothers and fathers."

After the October revolution it looked as though the Polish writers could abandon the political lampoon and the pamphlet, and devote themselves to real literary work. At the last general assembly of Polish writers, the poet Julian Przybos spoke eloquently of the need for writers to commit themselves in the struggle against Stalinism, but at the same time made it clear that he had no illusions about the literary value of writing done with a militant end in view. The time had now come, said Przybos, to distinguish between bold, honest journalism and literature: "The poets will no longer be honored merely for telling the brutal truth; that is the task of the journalists. Henceforward we must demand of poetry . . . more than rhymed manifestoes, we must demand of the poets works more profound and more durable than all the *J'accuse* of the journalists, however powerful they may be. Poetry is more than that, and more difficult. . . ." Not that literature should avoid contemporary problems, he said; but these problems must now be treated in depth, and tackled on authentically creative grounds.

Has there been a renascence of Polish literature since the demise of socialist realism? Some of the pre-war writers have gone back to their former themes. Iwaszkiewicz has recently published a long novel, which he must have written in the office he occupies as chairman of the Polish Peace Partisans, locking up his manuscript in a drawer every night before going home. The novel is sensitive, subtle, "Western," as good as most of his pre-war work; but his recent experience does not seem to have enriched him. Aleksander Wat, one of the rare intellectual poets of Poland, analyzes himself and the world in terms of a poetic Imaginary Museum. His work has features in common with Eliot and Auden. Artur Sandauer has again become Poland's best literary critic; he writes about the new Western literature, making use of a critical method somewhat reminiscent of Edmund Wilson's.

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Among the younger writers, something is lacking. The well-behaved, talented, and intelligent young men who came of age during the last decade succumbed to temptation, as writers. They were encouraged by the schools and universities, snatched up by the editors and the state publisher, and the shadow of socialist realism is present in their work, even when they did not conform to the Zhdanov rules. But despite the general grisaille of the captive literature, some of these men seemed very gifted. What an excellent poet, this Rozewicz, one thought, if only he were permitted to let himself go. In his choice of themes, in the wealth of his imagery, his boldness seemed to border on heresy. But his poems today are no better than they were under the Zhdanov terror. He seems merely adaptable, eager for approval. Possibly his past work spontaneously availed itself of that minuscule margin of freedom that exists under any terror, even that of Zhdanov (for if a man can write *spontaneously* in conformity with the demands of the moment, he can also write to order). Or is it that Rozewicz, having tried for so long to produce authentic poetry which would at the same time be acceptable, is no longer capable of any other creative approach?

In the Polish literary press today, one is struck by the dullness of the articles that denounce dullness, the banal language used to expose banality, the dead seriousness with which the right to be humorous is demanded. For all their disgust with literary grayness and mediocrity, the young Polish writers seem still to be suffering from that very malaise. Often their denunciations are so well-mannered and so well-written that one wonders whether they care about anything. Take any young man who comes of age around 1949. He has talent—that is to say, passions, a view of the world, and a taste for expressing himself. But everything around him is bent on leveling his tastes. He is told that what he would like to write springs from a petty-bourgeois mentality. He stops loving what he loves. He no longer loves himself. Does he love instead the dialectical construction which becomes the projection of his personality, the didactic vision of the world he is told to express? He does not. This may account for the deterioration of standards among those who, by virtue of their amiable social qualities and their capacity for adapting themselves, were the "good pupils" of the past period.

Strange as it may seem, the only young writers with anything like a personal vision in Poland today are a few young maniacs—bad boys, as it were, maladjusted, obsessed—who began to write without the least hope of being published. There is the poet Miron Bialoszewski. He was not made for the social world, let alone the "socialist" world. While his contemporaries—he was only twenty in 1945—became "writers,"

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he continued stubbornly to cultivate, in poverty, a private view of the world. In a society that glorified the material, giving a soul to steel and concrete and projecting its morality onto tractors and locomotives, he identified himself with objects in their total passivity, reassuring himself by the fact of their essential, swarming life. His work does not come over well in translation, but here are the titles of some of the poems he produced in ten years of "socialist" Poland: "Give Me Your Blessing, Floor"—"The Table Sings Its Universe"—"Study of a Key"—"The Fine Arts of My Room"—"Translation of an Umbrella"—"Translation of a Mattress."

The prose writer Marek Hlasko is another wild boy. After a wretched childhood, he spent a period in the Communist Youth, but soon left it to resume a vagrant life. His first collection of stories was not published until 1956. Its title is *First Step Into the Clouds.* Hlasko could not have been published earlier—his violence and crudity are like Céline or Henry Miller. But in him, as in Bialoszewski, we realize that certain literary themes and social myths have come to life, apparently spontaneously, under a political regime that seems totally contradictory to them. Hlasko's hero is of the type personified by Marlon Brando and James Dean—a tough, cynical, but still angelic boy, in revolt against society, but unable to express this revolt by any social choice, for all choices are equally detestable, obsessed by a nostalgia for the absolute and the pure. The only solution for him is love, but this also is an impossibility. In one of Hlasko's stories, a boy and a girl walk along interminable streets, looking for a place where they can be alone, never finding it. They are reduced to talk, in which love is almost never mentioned. The boy is thinking of a squirrel seen in his childhood:

"What are you thinking about—that squirrel?
"What should I think about—the *ca*? Why remember everything? There are things I don't want to remember."
"Many such things?"
"Many."
"It's funny . . ."
"What?"
"We don't know much about each other."
"It's your fault. When I begin, you tell me to stop."
"I don't want to hear."
"But it's the most important thing."

For unlike James Dean, Hlasko's hero was denounced to the political police at the age of eighteen and was tortured in an unspeakable way. The *"ca"* is a certain rubber glove.

It is works like those by Bialoszewski and Hlasko that give me

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most confidence in the future of intellectual and creative freedom in Poland. The writers' political and social commitment is of the greatest importance at a time of crisis, but it can wear itself out under the pressure of various "reasons of state." Polish pessimists are already talking of a choice between a cold and a hot "Kadarization." But when a new and valid work makes its appearance, it is evidence that man has found his way back to spiritual freedom.

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A COMMUNICATION

THOUGHTS ABOUT TWO HOMES FROM ABROAD

One does genuinely feel that there is something wrong with England—something that remains, after discounting the maladjustments that reflect one's own inadequacies, and the indictments that reflect one's own brilliance; but what is it?

Well, there's the type. We do tend to produce a type. England seems to speak with the same voice about internal and external politics, about the theater and the cinema, about literature and music, about religion and morals, and it is, essentially, a dead voice. Perhaps that's it. But that word dead, of course, requires so much definition—or rather requires a definition of life. Still, you have to begin somewhere.

What does dead mean, then? Well, let's take the *Sunday Times.* It's so discreet, for one thing. When Glubb Pasha and the British officers in the Arab Legion were dismissed, the *Sunday Times* wrote:

> To a British public long accustomed to think of General Glubb not only as the creator of the Arab Legion but as one who has devoted his life to the welfare of the Trans-Jordanian Arab, the shock of his summary dismissal will be equalled by the astonishment felt at the nation-wide demonstrations of joy which the news of his departure has evoked in Jordan. To close observers of Middle Eastern affairs, however, this evidence of "The Pasha's" unpopularity is not altogether unexpected, although the brutal ingratitude with which his services have been terminated is difficult to understand.
>
> Equally difficult is it to assess the exact extent to which his influence in affairs of State was exerted, or to what degree, if at all, he assumed Ministerial powers.
>
> The fact remains that, rightly or wrongly, it was popularly believed that the selection of Prime Ministers and their Cabinets, to say nothing of minor Governmental appointments, depended upon the grace and favour of "The Pasha." (March 4, 1956)

I wonder how large a segment of the British public thought about Glubb Pasha at all. It seems to me that he had been kept pretty quiet by those who knew—he was one of those things we don't talk about. As for his being "one who had devoted his life to the Trans-Jordanian Arab," nobody thinks in such terms any more. That's parchment; we write on paper nowadays. What is the whole style, in fact, but cotton

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wool gilt-edged? The "brutal ingratitude" of Glubb's dismissal seems to me comparatively easy to understand once the vital facts have slipped out in the next sentence or two. For surely those facts are vital, not only to the understanding of this event, but of the whole situation in the Middle East. To me, at least, it was an illumination to read that Jordan "depends for its very existence upon the subsidies it receives from the British Treasury," and that General Glubb commanded both the Arab Legion and the Jordanian police. To some degree, it seems clear, he did assume "Ministerial powers." What is difficult to understand about the abolition of such an institution as that? Its existence seems much more bizarre to me. For its existence to go unacknowledged, under our very noses, seems to me almost criminal. But we are told about it, (1), in this pompous prize-day style—"equally difficult is it to assess," and (2), after the event. Once the thing has become history it is allowed to have color and personality. British history is full of romance, says the *Times*; but as for the present—here is a short guide to parliamentary procedure and the party system.

Two weeks later the *Times'* leading article dealt with Cyprus:

> Secondly, the three-legged plan put forward by the Archbishop of Canterbury deserves most careful study, coming from so wise a leader of the Church, and in the course of a speech which had revealed Archbishop Makarios in his true light, self-condemned; behind the vestments of a prelate the calculations of a politician. . . . Finally, the Archbishop of Canterbury pleaded that Archbishop Makarios should be informed that his exile would end as soon as public order had been restored in Cyprus and that negotiations with him would be resumed as soon as the Constitution had been drafted. This plea is tempting but deceptive.
>
> It involves several assumptions. The first is that as soon as "public order had been restored," and the exile brought back, terrorism would have ended for good. Past events offer no assurance whatever of this. If Archbishop Makarios, however, really repents, and is prepared consistently to oppose terrorism and disorder, a new situation will arise.

"So wise a leader of the Church"—this is about like referring to her Majesty's "ardent interest" in literature or slum-clearance or soil-erosion. And when Archbishop Makarios is revealed "in his true light," what do we see? "Behind the vestments of the prelate the calculations of the politician." Come now! History canonizes prelates with political calculations! One imagines there have been, and are, comparatively few prelates without such calculations. "Self-condemned," indeed! But it is the last sentence above all that seems to me so striking, both in itself and as an echo of the earlier article. The *Sunday Times* speaks to the world like a senior master to a school, of which the British gov-

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ernment is headmaster. It expects from Jordan "gratitude," and from Cyprus "real repentance."

Of course, authority nearly always does wrap itself in an impenetrable mystery of rectitude; but this is a newspaper talking—the fourth estate, believe it or not. This is comment and discussion. The truth is that in England the tone of serious discussion and the voice of authority defending itself are much alike. Of course there is such a thing as political disagreement, but there is one complex of culture underlying both opinions. The *Sunday Times* and the *Observer* are identical in their tone, and what other responsible paper is there? Sometimes indeed one side may reject that culture—Left Wing extremists sometimes do; George Orwell, Kingsley Amis do—but they have nothing to put in its place.

And to whom does this tone belong, most truly, most typically? To the English gentleman. The real broadening of the mind that travel brings is to hear foreigners' outdated ideas of England, to laugh, and then to stop laughing: *they are all true.* All the human clichés, that have been laughed out of existence in England, still operate. It is their comic value that was laughed out of existence; they live on, disguised. In the embassies abroad, they aren't even disguised—there you meet gentlemen Evelyn Waugh or Bernard Shaw might have created. In the British Council, the absurdities are muted, but the serious part of the personality is the same. At home—in the Arts Council, the B.B.C., the stage, the universities, the professions—there is no radical difference, once the members stop being professional and become merely educated citizens. They are all gentlemen.

Of course, being a gentleman is no longer a matter of the old outward manifestations of social difference, of servants, Latin tags, or genealogical guarantees. Times have changed and these gentlemen are people of intelligence and character. But they remain a class for all that. A university education is now becoming more indispensable than a public school; but for much the same reasons. This is no technocracy or intellectual elite. It is a social class bound together by a community of tastes and habits in everything from religion to humor; very vague about religion, of course, very definite about humor. There is a certain territory of mind which everybody has in common, where they all follow certain paths and honor certain mountains.

For a map we may take the *Sunday Times* again, though there are many just as good. The whole thing, from Dilys Powell to Ernestine Carter, has a unity of tone. When new writers come along, like Roger

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Bannister or Siriol Hugh Jones, they are exactly like the ones they succeed. Exactly. That tone is not, like the *New Yorker*'s, merely metropolitan. Obviously there is much of America to which the *New Yorker* is alien. The *Sunday Times* is much more official and broadly based, much more the voice of England, not London. The only thing that could alienate an educated man, one of the class, from the *Sunday Times,* is a difference of politics. Even the *New Statesman,* when it turns to speak of non-political things, speaks with the same voice. There is no other educated voice in England. There is not even a voice like that of the independent columnists in America, some of whom do at least make administrative smugness uncomfortable and difficult. They are a symptom of the fundamental variety and autonomy of American interests. England, by comparison, is homogeneous.

One reason the working class in England has cooperated less with the Welfare State than with their old enemy, capitalism, may be that the new managers are just as "ruling class" as the old. They assume a superiority, not just that necessary to responsibility, but of the whole mind. This is only a guess, as to the reasons for the resentment on the part of the working class. But I know for certain that a great deal of energy is wasted and frustrated in England because of this tyranny of the one mind. It spoils life for the young people, as they're growing up. It makes everything less vivid, less valuable. Of course, it has its virtues —the humor, the discretion, the good manners, the sense of continuity, the sense of public responsibility—but all these only irritate now. And more important are the vices—the lack of a sense of personal adventure, the lack of inner life, the unwillingness to take great things greatly. We are, as a nation, directed outwards; and we don't recognize it, because we aren't looking to great possessions, only to stewardship and propriety.

Of course, there is plenty of impropriety and plenty of personal adventure, of the kind Evelyn Waugh describes. But self-respecting, self-propagating, passionate life—where will you find that? There is an inner deadness which the growing mind may not recognize, because it is the only thing it is used to, but which operates nevertheless as a sterilizer of the world, making harmless everything that might, through excess of life, threaten conformity. Everything is reduced to a diversion—drama to the B.B.C. drama repertory, art to the Old Masters; or to a decorum—politics and history as the celebration and evolution of the status quo.

One would like to contrast America with England at this point, but it is very difficult, precisely because in America there is not one

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mind or one voice. There is a residual agreement and similarity, of course, between the *New Yorker* and *Partisan* and the Actors' Studio, but that is not the same thing. There is the 'American way of life,' of course, but that's below the Plimsoll line of serious thinking. Britishness isn't. Where is the *Sunday Times* of America, the map of the American mind? One does not exist, because the American mind, in that tyrannizing, limiting sense, does not exist. That, I think, is why the American university graduate is apt to feel a kind of inferiority in the presence of an Englishman. It is not that the latter knows more, but that he seems to have a more general knowledge: he understands more that he has not studied, he knows how to treat serious things lightly, upon occasion, and light things seriously; he moves easily and independently in the world of the mind. Why? Because he has a map, a contour map even, showing heights and depths. Or, more exactly, because he knows everyone else in his world has a map too, and so does not regale fellow-travelers with the obvious. He does not think he has discovered things for the first time. Nor, of course, *does* he discover things, ever, except some out-of-the-way corner of quaintness and charm. The big things are all discovered and measured beforehand; their bigness is banal.

There is one thing in the American environment that all Americans do have in common, and that is just the variety of it. To an Englishman the human geography of America is as fantastic and improbable as the physical. Cities like Phoenix, Arizona, for instance; localities like the Tennessee mountains; religious sects, even one so enlightened as the Dutch Reformed Church—all these are without parallel in England. Crime, vice, poverty, riches, purity, prejudice, dedication, energy—all these find expression which we have only read about, in history books, which we have never known as our contemporary reality, and which our minds are not really ready to accept. There is in Americans, as contrasted with us, a sort of weatherbeaten quality, from having been more exposed to sharper extremes of climate, which corresponds somewhat to the bluff open-air effect they achieve at the hairdresser's and under the sunlamp. We are drawing-room creatures, by comparison.

Going to America with a bunch of English Fulbright scholars is quite an experience. These young Englishmen have such an air of gilded youth about them, quite unrelated to their personal incomes, and quite opposed to their actual eagerness to get something for nothing. Their sense of style overrides everything else; they feel the true

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test of education is the ability to talk brilliantly about nothing. And they have such a sense of community, of alliance; they call out to one another in a crowd, not oblivious to but careless of the hundred other faces that turn to observe, the hundred outsiders. What are they going to do in America? Well, of course they will study something or other. But the civilization they know in advance; their map included America. If they were going to India, now, they would have a sense of the differentness, the possible partial superiority of what they were going to see. They would have something approximating a readiness for reverence. But America: they know the vast cultural vacuum they will find there. And they find it. Listening to the best orchestra, they remark on the banality or the eccentricity of the program, the banality and eccentricity of the audience. Americans in England sometimes do the same. But sometimes they put it all down to our credit. Both possibilities are open to them, and so sometimes, a little more often than us, they arrive at a just estimate.

The English university, after all, is a hothouse. Its pride and joy is the exotic. And any difference of temperature, however normal and healthy, is apt to seem a change for the worse. The university is a social institution, with a social mission; it transmits a heritage of wisdom, not of learning; whatever they are studying, the students are keenly learning what tone of voice to use for Hollywood, which attitudes are permissible toward sex, how to be brilliant in conversation. (The idea of brilliance, incidentally, is a curiously central one; it means knowing things other people don't know, and not knowing what they do know, never working for exams but doing very well in them, and usually having some eccentricity of manner, either of shyness or of ebullience. It almost invariably connotes some lack of interest in, incapacity for, ordinary life; but not for Oxford and Cambridge life—that would cancel one's candidacy for brilliance.) University life has in the past, of course, been quite compatible with a fundamental seriousness and solidity. But many of the sources of that solidity have weakened and failed since then. The social-cultural structure, in which, at bottom, the universities put all their faith, is manifestly impermanent and imperfect, nothing to rely on or even patch up, but to reconsider and rebuild from the beginning, from outside. The manner of university life is an aristocratic manner. And our only future is democratic.

Sometimes Englishmen don't realize that fully: whatever our personal aptitudes or preferences, whatever society we would build if we had a choice, we are committed to democracy. Our fathers and grandfathers committed us. It is natural to rebel, at the moment we realize

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we are committed to the banal; we all know the absurdities and indignities of democracy, we could all be brilliant reactionaries; but it is natural also quickly to accept what is necessary. We have got to learn how to make real democracy work, with all its disadvantages. This real democracy is not a matter of getting more votes or organizing more trade unions; the task ahead is to shape a democratic mind, in which the assent and interest of the millions has been gained for what must be the work of the few: the creation of beauty, the achievement of life. Hitherto the interest of the millions has been only in projects to provide more money, more food, more films, or in war. Most of the great achievements of civilization, particularly contemporary ones, have left them indifferent or hostile. In America—in England too—there is a real self-righteous hostility to distinction of mind or manner, to intensity of thought or feeling, to criticism, to many kinds of greatness. The spread of education in the last fifty years has probably increased that hostility rather than creating understanding. If a democratic mind is to be born, the hierarchy of values will have to be maintained and fed from different sources from those of the past.

The basic problem is, after all, the transmission of the knowledge of the few down to the many quickly enough for society to remain vitally homogeneous. One man, let us say, can read and understand Dante in terms of his peculiar significance for this generation; ten men know enough to distinguish his work from that of others who claim the same; fifty men are sure about the ten, and can understand what they point out; a thousand men—and so on. The great work of a society's mind is to insure that knowledge and influence follow these channels and not others.

This works well enough in science today. Even the highly educated ones among us may not have the remotest idea of why Einstein was right, or what modern physics is about, but we know that he was right. We know that he was a brilliant scientist, that he deserves our respect, that the people who are presented to us as scientists really are what they claim to be, and so on. And not only we; the man in the street, too. That is as it should be. But what a different story in the arts. In nineteenth-century England everybody who read, however philistine, knew that Tennyson and Browning were great poets, and that great poets were great men. They knew in the same way that we know about science today. But the machinery by which that knowledge was transmitted will not do for us today, because it was not democratic. A gentleman recognized another gentleman and knew how far to trust him; literature and publicity limited themselves instinctively to the

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gentlemanly. Nowadays we don't trust gentlemen in matters of values; gentlemanliness is a deceit. Nevertheless, if we could put a body of men who were fully democratic, not aristocratic, and fully convinced of the values of the few, in key positions, they might form a sort of heart, a central ganglion of the democratic mind. These men, if any, will make democracy possible. Where shall we find them?

In England, the only possibility attests the impossibility. Kingsley Amis's heroes are in revolt against this dead culture, and at last—the first heroes in how many years?—they see no way out in terms of spiritual or revolutionary elites. They are possible citizens of a democratic nation. But they are the exceptions that prove the rule. What is their way out? Jim Dixon is caught up into his *machina* by an art-loving millionaire *deus,* and whisked away out of mortal view. John Lewis goes back to the people. There is no real solution for them. They are doomed to defeat, socially at least.

In America? In America one meets people who combine a simplicity and solidity of temperament with a genuinely adventurous mind, and sufficient shrewdness and self-confidence to keep them from disaster. And one finds them in the sort of place where they can do the most good—teaching English I at the universities, for instance. At their best they have a sort of determined ambition, a half-amused realization of being out on a limb, perilously separated from the mass. They include, in their personal and group past, all the huge unredeemed populace. Their ambition has been—until they met it—Britishness, culture. Now, as a satisfactory present and future, they have only each other, only more isolated fragments. It is up to them to make a new world; to explain and excuse to their parents and cousins and friends and pupils their differentness; to make the practical decisions that follow from their new insights—the votes, the agitations, the sympathies and apathies—palatable and influential in their communities. They are characterized, often, by domesticity and financial struggles. And financial struggles, especially in America, make it particularly necessary and difficult to explain oneself. They cannot say, as their equivalent in England can (tacitly, of course), I have risen in the world, I enjoy the company, putatively, of power and wealth. They can hardly say, I have done thus-and-so because I love my fellow man; so much of the change in them is toward criticizing their fellow, common, man. They must explain, somehow, that there are other values, and that they are living for them. Their life is privately, inherently, as well as publicly, professionally, a reconciliation of the contented self-respecting life

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of the many with the dissatisfactions of the few. If men like these can teach English Composition courses in the junior colleges, review for newspapers and magazines, produce in the repertory theaters, etc., something like the hierarchy of values may be maintained and the democratic mind may be born.

Heaven knows America is discrete, and a mess, but in the mess it seems to me there are some people—emerging or submerging, I don't know which—who could become the heart of a democracy. In them there is the glimpse of a tolerable future. In them one can feel a steadiness and passionateness, provoked by the rawer realities of American life, which are just not there in England. In them one can see a world and a group to which one can want to belong.

That is it, then. England is in the grip of a class, no less than fifty years ago; more, because the vitalities of the class have failed and receded, its limiting, characterizing traits now weigh more heavily, more deadly. Moreover, this class is originally, ineradicably, undemocratic. In these two ways America, which we despise, stands for health, and we stand for sickness. And there is much more chance, in America, of national life becoming something significant, something to command one's loyalties.

Martin Green

Ann Arbor, Michigan

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THEATER CHRONICLE

SHEEP IN WOLVES' CLOTHING

The governing idea of Graham Greene's *The Potting Shed* is satiric. What would happen, the playwright inquires, if a miracle were to occur in the family of a leading rationalist? The answer is easy: consternation. "A miracle in the family is worse than a murder case," says one of the characters, gloomily, and that is exactly the predicament. A young boy, it seems, who had hanged himself in the gardener's shed was raised from the dead by prayer. This "proof" of the existence of a deity, naturally, has been an extreme embarrassment to the rationalist family, and every effort has been bent to cover up what occurred. The resurrected youth has been hurriedly sent away to school; the gardener who witnessed the miracle has been pensioned off. The next twenty years have been devoted to living down the divine intervention, as though it were a disgrace. The event is blotted out of the family annals, and the culprit himself, when we meet him—now approaching middle age, ostracized by his freethinking parents, since the sight of him constitutes an intolerable reminder—has sunk to the bottom of society. That is, he has become a newspaperman, is divorced from his wife, lives in furnished rooms, with only a dog and a fellow newspaperman for companions; when the play opens, he is being treated by a psychiatrist. The treatment is not progressing because the traumatic event in the potting shed has been sheared out of his memory—censored by the rationalist super-ego. As the curtain rises, the old rationalist, now superannuated (his books no longer sell), is dying; the black sheep appears in the family living room, carrying his faithful dog's leash; his mother fiercely bars him from the deathbed, while refusing to give a reason. Shortly after this, driven back to his rooms in Nottingham, he decides to attempt suicide.

It is a saturnine conception, based on a simple reversal. Something good—a miracle or seeming miracle—is treated as though it were something bad. The rationalist family expels belief from its midst, as a pious family would expel unbelief. The shoe is on the other foot, but it still pinches. Expediency is shown to have played its customary part. The old rationalist suppresses the miracle because he has a proprietary in-

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terest in non-belief, just as the Church he has spent his life exposing has a proprietary interest in belief. "Henry was a fraud," his widow admits, wearily, after his funeral.

This fraudulence is rendered poignant by the fact of failure. A shift in fashion has made God popular and Henry unpopular. "Bertrand Russell to lunch," says the visitors' book of twenty years back, and the audience chuckles, as if at a rusty joke. A visitor from another century might ask what was funny about Bertrand Russell, but today's audiences catch on without being told. Bertrand Russell is funny because he "went out" with the cloche hat. Henry Callifer's weakness was his inability to face the truth. In the Callifer home, Jesus was known under the euphèmism of "the great Palestinian leader," and Christmas was rechristened "Children's Day." Yet this weakness, these evasions, are almost condoned by the playwright on account of their period quality. If crusading rationalism is "seen through" as a species of quackery, it nevertheless, for Graham Greene, as for Angus Wilson, has its lovable aspect, because it partakes of innocence, of a time before the Fall, which for these modern English writers seems to coincide with the literary discovery of evil (circa 1939). Those darling dodos, poor dears, were not hep to evil; this is the prevailing attitude.

That there were brave men among those old rationalists does not occur to Mr. Greene, all bravery being reserved for the present generation, and, in particular, for Catholics, who have dared to acknowledge God and His corollary, the devil. How much courage this took is debatable, but Mr. Greene is certain that it took a great deal, and his work, from beginning to end, is a parade of venturesomeness, to the accompaniment of a lugubrious prose-music, as of a death march. Nearly every one of Mr. Greene's works features a "daring" notion, verging on blasphemy but redeemed by a sententious piety that seems to leave it to God to judge whether Mr. Greene is not, after all, a better Catholic than the Pope. *The Potting Shed* is no exception. The satire on rationalism, after the first act, yields place to a somewhat maudlin "Catholic" drama, of faith lost and regained. The miracle, about which the play centers, proves to be no ordinary miracle, such as any saint might have performed, but an unsavory, dubious miracle that was just as well hushed up. The miracle-worker is revealed to be the familiar "bad" priest of Mr. Greene's work, the convert brother of the famous rationalist, in this instance—found drinking himself sodden in a rectory in East Anglia because he has lost God. It was he who raised the dead boy by prayer. "Take what I love best," he said to God, when he came upon the lifeless form in the potting shed, "and let

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him live." God obliged him, it seemed, by taking away his faith—the thing, of course, he loved best—and restoring the boy to life. (The boy, by the way, had been deprived of *his* faith by his rationalist father; that was why he hanged himself—in despair.)

It is a striking idea, this drastic bargain with God, and typical of Graham Greene's peculiar, sensational Catholicism. The truth is that this is the type of bargain ordinarily compacted with the devil. God does not have the power, at least in Catholic belief, to take faith away; faith can only be lost by the free will of the individual. The devil can take your faith away, if you consent to listen to him. But God would be shocked by the suggestion. If the priest's faith was lost, therefore, it must have been the devil who took it. But who, then, restored the boy's life? It must have been God, since the devil does not have the power to raise the dead. Or perhaps the boy was not dead at all, which was the rationalist view of the matter, and the *appearance* of death was one of the devil's counterfeits. But in that case there was no miracle. God's purpose, moreover, in working miracles, insofar as His purposes can be known to man, is to strengthen faith; a priest in real life who raised the dead by prayer would find his faith fortified. By this standard, the play's miracle is self-defeating; one believer, the priest, is lost from the fold, and no one is converted. Toward the end of the play, it is true, the priest regains his faith. "I left him praying," says the newspaperman, who has regained *his* faith also. But it is not specified how, through what agency, the priest got his faith back; it simply came.

This whole affair of the miracle will not stand any critical testing, including that of orthodoxy. As a Catholic, Graham Greene himself must know (or does he?) that the bargain he describes is diabolical—a version of the Faustian compact. Yet it is just this he trades on, as a playwright; it is what the audiences eat up. Without the "daring" scene of the drunken priest, living in peril of damnation, abandoned by God and berated by his housekeeper, the play would be a failure. With it, the play is a mild success at the box-office and considered very chic, among people who are not themselves religious but who recognize that religion is *à la mode,* together with psychiatry, while Bertrand Russell is "out."

Here, as in *The Cocktail Party,* another fashionable success, there appears to be an unholy alliance between religion and psychiatry. Like Sir Henry Harcourt-Reilly, Dr. Kreutzer, the therapist of *The Potting Shed,* is presented as a stand-in for God. "I never give a patient up." He repeats this three times, with an air of profound emphasis, in case

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the audience might have missed the significance; the analogy is, of course, the behavior of God toward wayward man. God never gives up either, so long as the patient is alive. The idea of the Hound of Heaven, hunting down a soul like a retriever, is present, not only in the figure of the psychiatrist ("Our Father, methadrine, hallowed by thy name," says the newspaperman in a blasphemy that is really an inverted prayer), but in the actual dog, who is heard howling offstage in the potting shed, on the scent of the buried miracle. The rationalist mother hates dogs and will not have one in the house; this means that she hates God and will not have Him in the house either. If God, like the mythical "George Spelvin," the actor who doubles in a cast, appears as a psychiatrist and a dog (the leash is symbolic too), He is also, I think, present in the young girl who, by playing detective, clears up the mystery at the center of the play. This mystery seems to be original sin, as well, which is located in the potting shed, i.e., the matrix of creation. The dismissed gardener is called Potter, and perhaps he is God too, sent away by the rationalists; the allusion seems to be both to the Garden of Eden and to the Potter's hand. In the final lines of the play, the young girl announces that she has had a dream in which she meets a lion on the path to the potting shed who licks her hand when she shows no fear of him—the Lion, presumably, would be Truth, and the young girl, then, the dauntless Sherlock, might be not God, but the Church, God's private eye, like the private agents of *The Cocktail Party.*

The audience, naturally, does not catch all these holy references on the fly—how many people have heard of the Hound of Heaven? But it is aware of a charge of meaning, something portentous in the atmosphere, something sly and suggestive. Religion, hinted at in this manner, becomes a form of obscenity; the same effect is achieved in *The Heart of the Matter,* where a broken rosary in Major Scobie's desk drawer drops into the story, lightly, like contraband, before the reader has been told that the police officer is, in fact, a Catholic. That praying for others can be a rather dangerous activity is intimated in *The Heart of the Matter* also. "Father," prays Major Scobie, injudiciously, at the bed of a sick child, "give her peace. Take my peace forever but give her peace." God answers Scobie in the manner of a malicious fairy, granting the wish of a mortal; He promptly takes the child's life (is this not giving her peace?), and contrives things so that Scobie will be driven to suicide. This God is a very doubtful customer to deal with; in *The End of the Affair,* another rash prayer is answered, to everyone's discomfiture, and God slides into the scene as the sup-

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posed illicit lover of a married woman. "I love you," she writes, and how could anyone be expected to guess that she meant Him and not a man?

Religion in Graham Greene has a monotonously bootleg character; spirited into the plots, it is linked with crime (detectives, the police, murder) and with the vices of drunkenness and tedious adultery. The limp rhythms and flat similes of the writing ("Eternity going on and on, like a long litany on a wet day," "You were in love with Nothing, like a woman," "He's in my lungs like air," "Then God comes back like memory") enhance the sense of squalor, weariness, and self-pity, as if religion were a drug-addiction, a bad habit, to which a small coterie was condemned for life.

God is less like air in the lungs, in Graham Greene, than like a depressing smog that hangs over a modern industrial city. He permeates the novels and plays with His unfailing presence, and in turn He soaks up the smells of His surroundings—bad cooking and mildew and dirty sheets and stale alcohol. You would not think that this was well calculated to make religion attractive to the general public. But the public is titillated by this deity, created in its own bored image. Religion, for non-believers (and almost everyone, at bottom, is a non-believer), has become the new pornography. If Graham Greene's works, in the aggregate, are tiresome, for all their gift for suspense, and "leave a bad taste in the mouth," this does not detract from their appeal, for pornography has always been tiresome, while catering to an appetite for novelty; it cannot escape this fate.

Mary McCarthy

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ART CHRONICLE

TANGIBLE ABSTRACT ART

People say abstract expressionism cannot last. One wonders why not. Voltaire probably thought the same thing about the sentiment of *La Nouvelle Heloïse,* but now we know what an incredible life all forms of Rousseauism displayed in the history of European culture. Such styles of feeling have a way of surviving far beyond the life-expectancy calculated for them, their effects unmeasurable, their durability untested. For this reason it is worth discussing a certain current cultural phenomenon—the development of a curious impatience with modern art.

Many observers expect something to happen: perhaps a clearer resurgence of figurative elements in painting, or less abstraction in both painting and sculpture, or new techniques beyond metal and plastic, or new genres, or the much-heralded return to nature. Is the evidence to be found in the landscapes and domestic interiors of painters like Jane Freilicher, Reginald Pollack, or Felix Pasilis? In the gingerbread world of Herbert Katzman, the portraits double and otherwise of Larry Rivers? The Whitney Annual provided no warrant for thinking that any of these anticipated genres or styles have become dominant, and perhaps this is the reason it met with such irritated boredom, impatience, and disaffection. Much of the exhibition had the familiarity of a Royal Academy spring salon; the expected people showed the expected things. There was Albers' conscientious and theoretically valuable picture, Milton Avery's attractive tree, Glarner's relational painting, Karl Knaths' wharf, Marca-Relli's collage; Raphael Soyer's undernourished seamstress, Jack Levine's "Medicine Show." For the slick modern there were Ferren, Hultberg, and Heliker; for biomorphism, Baziotes. And examples of Gwathmey, Dehn, Burchfield, Cadmus, Sheeler, Evergood, Sam Francis, Ad Reinhardt, and others. Among pictures of more than usual interest, were Guston's "Dial," Grace Hartigan's sloppily-painted "Summer Street," Gottlieb's "Red Sky," Tworkov's very loose "Prophet," Balcomb Green's consciously Tiepolesque "Seated Figure." Also James Brooks' "Jackson," very beautiful and explosive but somehow lacking closure, Lee Gatch's "The Glass Jungle," and de Kooning's "July."

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Now, there was nothing about this exhibition to make anyone despair; it showed variety, interest, and many levels of competence and talent. Of course, such a large display, of nearly two hundred entries, is bound to be stultifying in part, unless it provides a *scandale*, as in the Salons, or as Larry Rivers' large portraits attempted to do in previous years. Here there was nothing one had absolutely never seen before, much of the work was familiar and expected; some could have been better, a lot could have been much worse. Why then the irritation with it? Surely not alone because some good painters were omitted and some less worthy ones included. And surely not because there was more abstract painting than social-realist? But perhaps this comes close to the reason.

We see around us a curious situation. The avant-garde painting known as abstract expressionist or New York style, with its possible rivals in Chicago and the West, is beginning to reach its maturity. There will be soon, and indeed there is already, a generation of young painters who remember among their formative experiences not Paris, nor the Stieglitz shows, not WPA art projects nor small unknown galleries, not even exhibitions at Art of This Century—but rather the Pollock show at the Museum of Modern Art, or de Kooning at the Janis Gallery, or Hofmann at the Whitney. Indeed, several years ago, Grace Hartigan was reported to have said that the Museum of Modern Art served as her "academy," and her own work itself may be serving the same function for someone else. What complicates the situation is that these painters and many others are now popular to a degree unimaginable for the "old" avant-garde. So, at openings people ask each other: Where, who, what is the avant-garde today? Is the Tanager Gallery on East Tenth Street *actually* more avant-garde than the Janis or de Nagy galleries? If Larry Rivers, say, is avant-garde, then is de Kooning one of the Old Masters? And then presumably Miro, Matisse, Picasso are pre-historic, the giant race before the Flood. If Pollock is still thought to be avant-garde, then how account for this large quasi-retrospective show of his work at a large popular museum? Clearly, the subject is most confusing. But one measure of how far what was avant-garde has been domesticated is, I think, this curious impatience which many people feel now about the newest painting.[1] It is as if they had learned what this work can tell them, have absorbed its discoveries and advances, and are now waiting for the next lurch of the *Zeitgeist*.

1 Those who create advanced art don't necessarily think in the same terms, although they may show parallel kinds of interest and disaffection. Clement Greenberg discusses this in a very valuable essay on the revived interest in Monet, in *Art News Annual, 1957*.

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An analogy with European culture insists that the avant-garde replace itself in every generation while preserving the form of its embattled relation to art. Never has that analogy been more misleading, but the complexity of the subject precludes proper consideration here. There is, however, something in contemporary painting which can still be called avant-garde—the concern with the medium—and which is possibly the one aspect of art that always remains avant-garde. It defies popularizing, and, because of the nature of taste and talent, even defies widespread acceptance, remaining approachable only by means of a kind of aesthetic empathy; not an empathy with the "creative principle"—that *can* filter down—but with the demands and attractions of paint itself. Abstract expressionist painting has made this its subject, but one might show that such an emphasis has always been the sign of advanced art—e.g., in the "new" medium of oil paint, or the "new" method of chiaroscuro, as much as colored shadows, flecks of paint, or the flat surface. A rhetoric of art's imperious aggressive communication tends to obscure more important motives—the pleasure and pain of the process itself—which are less congenial to discussion. Art's goals are higher than those of any craft or sport, and the pleasures of the medium, the difficulties in procedure, the excitement of the encounter are also more intense.

If, however, one does not have a sense for the urgency of the medium itself, then the attractions of modern painting might seem reducible to those of pattern and design, forestalling greater, more entire claims. Patterns must not make large claims: the Oudry dogs must stay on the chairs, the Persian rug on the floor, the Toile de Jouy must remain regular on the drapes. Still, patterns can create impatience; they are almost art, and therefore intriguing, but in the end they fail to reach the concentrated intensity of art. This, I submit, is one of the sources of an essentially *fermé* impatience that advanced painting provokes. But pictures are not designs or patterns, or color harmonies or exercises in balance; they have no accommodating regularity, and Pollock did not agonize over a pattern. A kind of *sprachgefühl* for the medium, or what I have called aesthetic empathy, was always of value to the art-lover; but not until recently has it assumed such intense and major importance, because painting has rarely asserted the primacy of the medium as contemporary painting does.

I think this must explain something of Dali's great popularity. His fantasies closely resemble the fantasies of people who are not painters, and he does nothing to make them visually imaginative. The point about his work—as a recent exhibition at the Carstairs Gallery again demonstrated—is how hugely it fails as painting, and how feebly Dali

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summons the *techniques* of the Old Masters he is reputed to resemble: he cannot paint the fur, skin, lace, velvet, fruit or cloth that Vermeer or Veronese could do, so the comparisons don't even begin to be embarrassing. On the other hand, Jackson Pollock, a very different kind of painter, was *technically* very accomplished. And even though the Museum of Modern Art's exhibition of his work is ambiguous in size and intention, it shows technical prowess of a very high order. What is striking is the fact that Pollock achieved this by a method which was unpredictable in its results and not susceptible to the usual kind of control, although it had its own kind. Pollock's work was emblematic of advanced painting's concern with the surface reality of the medium, and perhaps it had the greatest success in creating plastic space without relying on cues for depth. It seems to me that Pollock's admirers do him a disservice by eulogizing the violence, the turbulent destructiveness of his painting. His work at its best is more significant for its plastic organization of unceasing vitality, for order, concentration, and control. Of the pictures at the Museum, I would mention especially "Out of the Web," "One," "Ocean Grayness," and "Number 2, 1949." Pollock's sudden death was a great loss for art; of all painters, he should have lived, because one wants to know how he would have painted ten or twenty years from now. The extraordinary richness of his achievement, and the absoluteness of his invention provoke unsolved questions—tantalizing, like Fermat's last theorem.

The Museum also did Pollock a disservice by coupling his show with that of Balthus. The pictures of Balthus invite an easier identification than Pollock's with the content of fantasy, they provide a literary kind of "vision," and an expressionism without abstraction. Their appeal rests more on a strangeness of subject than of pictorial means; the tone is of a cold weird sensuality, a mysterious *attente,* the sinister possibilities of *la vie faubourgeoise.* In street scenes, the figures are more isolable and more caricatured than in domestic interiors; the houses may be done in a fairly traditional modern French manner, but they reflect some of the other mystery. Balthus is often very affecting as a painter, so that it is annoying to have him presented in contrast, as it were, to Pollock. The Balthus pictures at the Pierre Matisse Gallery seemed better, perhaps because they served no programmatic contrast.

A most instructive show was to be found at the Kleemann Gallery, in a selection of Kandinsky gouaches and watercolors. These were not of the "great" 1909-14 period, but from 1904-09 and of the '20s and later. (Current myths about the '20s tend to obscure the fact that *that* period was not actually a very adventurous one. Rather it was in the years

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before the First World War that we find more inventive imagination. The '20s, somewhat like the '50s, was perhaps a time when the earlier gains were consolidated.) It is puzzling to see Kandinsky come to the end of his explorations, after inaugurating a kind of painting which later flowered into our contemporary abstract expressionism. His more recent work provides something of an answer, because it shows a painter interested in all the things abstract painters are *thought* to be interested in—constructional problems of design and balance, geometric forms, non-objective arabesques, relations to musical ideas, and so on—but not in the medium of paint itself. Kandinsky's explorations took him elsewhere, so he was not moved to assert what his pictures of 1909-14 seemed to imply.

Some ironic operation of the law of scarcity seems to result if every medium is to assert itself. At least that is my feeling about the new gallery, World House, which opened at the Carlyle with much fanfare. The gallery itself was the most important part of the show. Designed by Frederick Kiesler and Armand Bartos, its point was to integrate architecture and art objects, by means of an original design of walls, lighting, rooms, etc. The idea was admirable, although the gallery seemed to me unsuccessful. The subdivision of space into rather small rooms on two levels, connected by a floating stairway, made for traffic and confusion; combined with the undulating walls, and low ceilings, the effect was claustral, and no gain at all for the pictures and sculpture. It seems that architecture cannot assert itself in this way. In churches, palaces, or similar buildings, the displayed objects are taken as part of the medium, or are designed for the setting. But for transient exhibitions, perhaps the more neutral space of most galleries is preferable, even the dead whiteness in the former quarters of the Guggenheim Museum—perhaps even the clutter and unintegrated style of surroundings like the Shchukin salons or the Musée Jacquemart-André.

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Adolph Gottlieb's new pictures, at the Martha Jackson Gallery, were extremely impressive, except for a few, like the powder-puffy "Black, Blue, Red," and the Arabic-looking "From Midnight to Dawn." This gifted painter has moved very successfully from his pictograph convention of recent years. He still uses arrows, suns, and stars, and divides his canvas in hieratic ways, but not in the grid he was formerly so fond of. Many of the pictures use, instead, the device of a horizon ("Hot Horizon," "Red at Night," "Cold Front I," "Groundscape") which can provide flat painting, often with large sun-like spots, as well as more textured, more various areas of linear rather than spatial incident. The "horizons" and "grounds" work well together, although of two different orders, combining two divergent strains in modern painting. "Falling Star," one of the most beautiful pictures, does not use a horizon, however, nor does "Centipede," an extremely appealing small work. "Hot Horizon" and "Unstill Life III" were also good pictures, and the level of most of the others was very high. Gottlieb is that interesting example of a very original painter who manages to triumph over his influences, responding to them with his own strength and inventiveness, and thereby achieving pictures of great beauty. (George McNeil is another such painter, as one could see in his show at the Poindexter Gallery. I would mention "Wide Structure," "Gigue," and "Concupiscence" as being especially good. Perhaps the point about Gottlieb and McNeil is that they bring to their influences an already developed individual sense of the medium.)

Hans Hofmann is the *doyen* of abstract expressionism, making his influence on it felt in a way that is perhaps immeasurable. His show of recent pictures at the Kootz Gallery was extremely puzzling; I would like to have seen it against the background of his other work. Many of the pictures start out Hofmannesque—very large, bright, exciting in their energetic statement, compelling in their creation of kaleidoscopic depth and space, strong, finished, impressive. But in what seems an afterthought, these pictures acquire Glarner-like squares of flatly painted color, precisely edged, and placed at significant areas of the canvas *on top of* the picture. They seem to me to destroy the picture already developing beneath them, to flatten it, and make minor the very beautiful painting some of them have. Ideally, I imagine, they should serve as a foil or a frame, fixing the range of plastic movement, setting it off and making it more intense. Instead, they seem to have an opposite effect, as in the immense "Towering Spaciousness." In others, such as "Let There Be Light," they seem to be more a part of the picture; this one has the squares painted more freely, more

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blotchily. But a picture like "Circular Shifting" is not helped by them at all; those careful areas of olive-y green and tomato orange at the lower left seem to assert a surface at variance with the rest of the picture, but not in any ironic fashion, and not by creating a tension between the squares and the rest. Clearly, such devices are unpredictable in their effects; they cannot be initially good or bad, but, like heavy outlining, or circles around focal points, like unpainted areas in a finished picture, or dead areas in a busy one, these devices yield only to the pragmatic test. For Hofmann these squares may imply the development of a new style or they may be more closely related to some aspects of his work which are not vivid in my mind. It is for this reason that I should like to see the range of his work now.

Since these notes were assembled, many interesting shows will have opened; I am sorry not to be able to comment on some of them, particularly the Whitney show of young Americans, the Matta and Ferren shows, and Helen Frankenthaler's. I have not usually liked Ferren's work, but reports of his recent show interest me. Helen Frankenthaler's painting becomes more impressive each year; she has just had her fifth one-man show at the de Nagy Gallery, and is one of the most interesting of the younger painters. Much of her work is characteristic of the contemporary temper in the way it consolidates past gains. She shows, however, a conscious response to abstract traditions, rather than the kind of unconscious imitation that often prevails among less gifted painters.

Indeed, one should be able to say of the best contemporary painters something like what Dryden said about Jonson and the Ancients: "he invades authors like a monarch; and what would be theft in other poets, is only victory in him."

Sonya Rudikoff

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BOOKS

HENRY JAMES AS LATTER-DAY SAINT

THE AMERICAN HENRY JAMES. By Quentin Anderson. Rutgers University Press. $6.50.

The admirers of Henry James are not likely to feel lukewarm about this book. Mr. Anderson's revolutionary approach to James, which transforms the novelist into a moral allegorist using the Swedenborgian symbols and assumptions of his father Henry Sr., was first offered in *Kenyon Review* ten years ago; and since then his work has won the praise of such accomplished critics as Francis Fergusson, Lionel Trilling and (with major qualifications) F. R. Leavis. This is not a company to be contradicted unless one has good reasons, so I had better say at once that to my mind the reasons are not only good but urgent. Mr. Anderson's book is the product of enormous labor, skill, earnestness and ingenuity; but it is a bad book. Turgid in style, perverse and willful in approach, it rests upon assumptions that must prove destructive to literary values and critical discriminations.

What strikes one upon first reading this book—it constitutes a radical criticism—is that even while staking out the largest claims for his thesis Mr. Anderson never states precisely what it is. We are to be persuaded that an important relationship exists between some of James's novels and the moral philosophy of his father; we are told that without grasping this relationship it is virtually impossible to make out the meaning of these novels; but we are not told, with sufficient rigor and exactness, what that relationship is supposed to have been. Mr. Anderson simply fails to confront the question: Was James consciously and systematically charting an allegorical equivalent of his father's system, which in effect would transform his late novels into cabalistic texts, or did the values of that system so infiltrate James's consciousness that, quite regardless of his will, they also dominate his novels? Nor is this a secondary question; for even, I think, those critics most rigid in dismissing the "intentional fallacy" would have to grant that as regards allegory the description of the genre is inseparable from the claim for intention.

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For long stretches of his book Mr. Anderson "translates" the action of James's later novels—with much wrenching and twisting, which I shall specify later—into the vocabulary of the elder James. That such a shift from the son's marvelously complex and subtle vision to the eccentric husks of the father's doctrine must sadly impoverish and narrow some very great works of art is finally the crux of the matter; but at the moment I prefer to stress that this process of "translation," even if one could find it convincing and useful, does not necessarily tell us very much about the intellectual relationship presumed to have been present between father and son.

In Mr. Anderson's presentation the philosophy of James Sr., despite some frightful language, turns out to be as simple as most systems of nineteenth-century American romantic moralists: it is an account of the struggle between Love and Self, between morality as a spontaneous, unfettered, personally forged and endlessly renewed "style," on the one hand, and moralism as the institutional hardening and corruption of Selfhood, on the other. It would therefore almost be possible to "translate"—though for no good reason whatever—a number of other nineteenth-century American novels into the vocabulary of the elder James, since his ideas had much in common with the whole transcendentalist impulse of mid-nineteenth-century America. The generation of writers of that time, Mr. Anderson himself declares, "tried to maintain . . . the moral and religious sanctions which, for their fathers and grandfathers, had been institutionalized. They tried to stuff into the self what the society had ceased adequately to represent." Good enough; but in this remark there is neither novelty—the point having been made most notably by Yvor Winters in his fine essay on James, which Mr. Anderson does not mention—nor warrant for reading *The Golden Bowl* as an allegory to which only the system of James Sr. provides the key. All that can reasonably be said, and many critics have said it, is that James absorbed a good deal of the moral idealism floating about in New England at the time and absorbed some of it, no doubt, from his father.

At some points, however, Mr. Anderson bids higher. "The younger son," he writes, "is, to my knowledge, the only man who has ever *used* the elder James's beliefs" (emphasis in original). What is more, Mr. Anderson can speak of "the teasing way in which, throughout the prefaces, James refers to his emblems without ever announcing or classifying them." Not only, then, was James consciously working with his father's "emblems," but he was engaged in a "teasing" effort to obscure their presence and their meaning. Here Mr. Anderson approach-

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es the Conspiracy Theory of Criticism, which gives us writers practicing a life-long mystification: Kafka secreting Freudian formulas in his work, Melville conducting a secret quarrel with God throughout his novels. It is an approach to literature which makes it very hard to distinguish between a novel and the Zohar.[1]

In any case, if it is Mr. Anderson's intention to say that James's *use* of his father's emblems is the central discovery of his book, then one would expect that some evidence might be offered to indicate that James also knew what Mr. Anderson knows he was doing. But not a line! Mr. Anderson feels obliged to quote from James's letters and autobiographies several statements gently disavowing interest in his father's system, as for example this one:

It comes over me as I read . . . how intensely original and personal [his father's] whole system was, and how indispensable it is that those who go in for religion [But doesn't that phrase give away the whole show?—I.H.] should take some heed of it. I can't enter into it (much) myself—I can't be so theological nor grant his extraordinary premises, nor throw myself into conceptions of heavens and hells, nor be sure that the keynote of nature is humanity. . . .

This was written by the mature James in 1885, and for those who are familiar with the elaborate kindliness of his letters, as well as the depths of his filial piety, the passage must surely seem all the more decisive as an intellectual dissociation. Mr. Anderson wrestles with it manfully, and declares that it shows the younger James to be "plainly uninformed" about his father's system—though why this is supposed to support his case that Henry Jr. "*used* the elder James's beliefs" escapes me.

Nor is there anything in the Notebooks concerning symbolic or allegorical intentions of a systematic kind, despite the fact that James discussed in them so many of his themes, methods and literary problems. (Swedenborg is not listed at all in the index to the Matthiessen-Murdock edition, while James Sr. makes his few appearances in a

1 Not hard for everyone. Mr. Anderson's approach is essentially fanatical, but he is careful to avoid the manner of fanaticism. Only once, to my knowledge, does he slip into the amusing sort of self-congratulation, the claim to unique revelation, which is the rationale for writing criticism to prove that an author has been engaged in some form of secret speech: "He [James the novelist] was of course shrewd enough to know that what was so carefully concealed would be perceived only by an able reader, but he was clearly unaware that his sense of humanity was emotionally so private and historically so special that this scheme would not be apprehensible unless the reader used his father as a guide."

And since of course no one before Mr. Anderson has systematically used the father as a guide. . . .

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strictly personal capacity, never in regard to literary matters.) For James's utter silence concerning what is supposed to have been the dominant influence upon his novels—indeed, the conceptual system he *"used"* in structuring them—Mr. Anderson has a remarkable explanation: "the novelist was incapable of conveying information simply *as* information; he had to give a dramatic form to everything." In regard to literary topics this is hardly true, since James was avid for, and loved to note down, such information. But suppose it were true: why then did the novelist not give "dramatic form" to his memories—surely they would have been affecting—of having worked with his father's "emblems," just as he gave "dramatic form" in the prefaces and Notebooks to his memories of having worked with so many other elements of his experience and observation?

Perhaps the most astonishing aspect of Mr. Anderson's method is his treatment of those novels—*The Europeans, Washington Square, The Bostonians, What Maisie Knew* and *The Awkward Age*—which, he admits, cannot be squeezed into his scheme. He simply puts them aside, casts them off: they do not behave according to the rules laid down for "the American James." But when you are proposing a revolutionary approach to a great writer like James, an approach which renders

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most previous criticism obsolete, you can hardly dismiss so casually this dazzling list of masterpieces: it is as if one discovered the "key" to Dostoevsky but had to grant that the doors remained locked to *Crime and Punishment* and *The Possessed.*

As it happens, three of these novels are set in America (which comes to three more than any among those Mr. Anderson does discuss), and one wonders how it is that precisely the novels with an American setting fail to be relevant to "the American James." More important, Mr. Anderson, in the course of dividing the novels into "emblematic" sheep and "non-emblematic" goats, fails to ask himself some essential questions: If *The Bostonians, Washington Square,* etc. fail to conform to what is supposed to be the central principle of James's vision, what other principle do they conform to? And if there is at work in these novels another, let us call it "alien" principle, what is its relation to the "emblematic" one that controls such books as *The Wings of the Dove* and *The Golden Bowl*? And finally, if such an "alien" principle is to be found in some of James's novels,[2] might it not be supposed that it also operates, however fitfully, in those novels Mr. Anderson has chosen to consider? For unless we assume James to have been hopelessly schizoid, it hardly seems plausible that he could have spent a lifetime writing from two utterly disconnected and opposing principles of composition that would each have no effect upon the work dominated by the other. Mr. Anderson is to be criticized not for failing to answer such questions, but for failing to raise them.

The image of James that emerges from Mr. Anderson's book is that of a painfully high-minded, idealistic, humorless and unworldly Professor of Moral Philosophy. James, we are told, celebrated "a vision of the moral life founded on personal freedom and unsupported by institutional props. . . ." His world "is one in which dramatic situations are always prior to fated conditions. . . ." "A conception of the world in which consciousness made all the differences exempted him from the tyranny of conditions, external compulsions and from the unblinking pressure

2 Novels which, in passing, he violently mishandles, as if they were somehow culpable for being "non-emblematic." Thus, his extraordinary statement that *The Bostonians* is not written from James's usual assumption of "our accountability for our experience." Or his even more extraordinary statement that *The Awkward Age*—a brilliant but very difficult novel—depends on "a spectrum of moral judgments and presumptions about the social scene which the reader possesses before he begins to read." I should think myself that the problem in regard to *The Awkward Age* is to be able to possess its "moral judgments and presumptions about the social scene" *after* one has read it.

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of the unaware."[3] (Here, as elsewhere, Mr. Anderson seems to be talking about James as a novelist rather than as a person.) And finally, James was not trying "to cope with a threatening cultural situation in which, as a matter of fact, he was not involved."

Apart from that "unblinking pressure of the unaware," which sounds fine but tends to resist paraphrase, all of these statements can be examined and shown to be inaccurate or serious exaggerations. If James held "a vision of the moral life founded on personal freedom," then a "threatening cultural situation" would necessarily involve him, since it would be working in opposition to his "vision of the moral life"; and as James in his unsystematic way knew only too well, that is precisely what did happen. It is true of course that "a vision of the moral life founded on personal freedom" does inform his novels, but what Mr. Anderson refuses to recognize—in the interest of his thesis, but at great cost to the moral tension within the novels—is that there is also present in them a profound and often extremely painful sense of "the tyranny of conditions." What else endows them with their high drama? *What else could?* For without this awareness of the power of all that is external to the self, it may be doubted that James or anyone else could write novels at all.

But it is when one turns back to the novels themselves, while remembering Mr. Anderson's words, that one rubs one's eyes. Hyacinth Robinson, caught between Paris and the Sun and Moon café—is he in a dramatic situation prior to fated conditions? Isabel Archer, discovering that her very quest for unconditioned freedom leads her into a terrible subjection—is she exempt from the tyranny of conditions? Maggie Verver, desperately maneuvering to save her marriage—is she free from external compulsions?

Reading *The American Henry James* one would hardly suppose that novels, among other things but surely not as the least of them, are *performances;* that a writer like James could yield himself to a moment of spontaneity, could soften into his gift for play, even in his most freighted and solemn works; that he could put something into a novel because it seemed noteworthy as an instance of human conduct, quite without reference to its place in a symbolic scheme to be announced fifty or sixty years later; that, like every other novelist who ever wrote,

3 Yet we read, concerning this novelist fortunate (and unique) enough to be "exempted . . . from the tyranny of conditions," that "as a thinker, Henry James is an exquisitely ordered version of the most general manifestations of the culture of his origins." One might suppose that any writer who can be described as a "version" of the manifestations of his culture is not entirely free from the tyranny of conditions.

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he could be fascinated with human character in its own right and for its own sake, even if he was silly enough to speak of Russian novels as "fluid puddings"; and above all that James, ingrained nineteenth-century American as in one part of himself he was and habitual moralist as he also was, could ever be tempted by sophistication or worldliness or malice or even, perhaps, the sinister—temptations that might lead him, as it has led almost everyone else, to like and admire a magnificent schemer like Kate Croy. If the bent of contemporary criticism is to supply novelists with severe moral intentions, might it not also recognize how creative and life-renewing the relaxation of moral intentions can be in a work of art? Like so many other critics of our time, Mr. Anderson does not really read novels; he reads through or past them, searching so obsessively for the figure that he quite chews up the carpet.

And so it is that he summarizes the "emblematic themes":

The Ambassadors has for its subject the failure of the law, and its correspondent 'church' is New England's, here standing for the elder James's 'Jewish' church. *The Wings of the Dove* treats the redemption of an individual by an exemplary savior, Milly Theale; the correspondent church is 'Christian.' *The Golden Bowl*'s subject is the regeneration of mankind, and its correspondent church is that of the new Jerusalem announced by Swedenborg.

Admittedly, quoting these summary sentences without providing the material from the elder James upon which they are based, is to make them seem more obscure than they need be or already are.[4] But the objection to this sort of thing isn't that one can't make sense out of such descriptions; it is that finally they have so little to do with literature. In Mr. Anderson's reading of the great trio of James's final period, Prince Amerigo emerges as "the walking sum of history," Adam Verver as "the Christ founding a new temple," Lionel Croy as "the Devil," Colonel Assingham as also "a devil of sorts." Mme. de Vionnet "turns out to be a lovely lie" (whereas I had taken her for an attractive and cultivated middle-aged woman painfully discovering that the man she loves is preparing to leave her). Kate Croy's sister, Mrs. Condrip,

4 Here is Mr. Anderson at his most high-powered: "James [in *The Golden Bowl*] seems to have had a great deal of fun in detailing emblematically the marriage of the second or universal Adam, the Grand Man or *Maximus Homo*, to the Eve, or *minimus homo* (also called *vir* by the elder James). He first named her Charlotte, the emblematic significance being 'little man' or *minimus homo* (Charlotte is a *diminutive* of Carl, which originally meant man, or male). He then imagines the courtship as recapitulating the relation God had to Israel, since Charlotte is spiritually Jewish, that is, is publicly represented by the 'church' and 'state', the Assinghams." I assure the reader that in context this passage is comprehensible. But could anything be more unfortunate?

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proves to be "the literal church" in *The Wings of the Dove*. Mrs. Assingham "may be called 'the church' " of *The Golden Bowl*. (Indeed she may: but it is so much more interesting to call her an Assingham.)

One learns from Mr. Anderson that the elder James's "taste for the unconditioned which led to an explicit denial of the reality of sexuality and death, is present in the novelist, is, in fact, the very ground of his marvellous capacity for creating aesthetic order." What can be meant by "an explicit denial of the reality of sexuality and death" —or whether denials of the two can be aligned so readily—is a neat problem. But if such a phrase does mean anything, where in James are we to find the evidence for it? In Catherine Sloper as an example of life as "unconditioned"? In the fate of Roderick Hudson as an instance of the unreality of death? In the radiating power of Kate Croy as "emblematic" of the unreality of sex? Reading Mr. Anderson's emblematic version of *The Wings of the Dove,* one sees poor Milly Theale, the red-haired American girl with the fatal illness and the yearning to live and the pathetic desire to forgive, being cast as a God. It is with some relief that one turns to F. W. Dupee's book on James, to read there that Milly conveys "the essential pathos of all mortality by being under special sentence."

The critic driven by an urge to schematization can become ruthless with his materials. What Mr. Anderson succeeds in doing is to replace James's natural sympathy for his characters with a fanatic rigor: it might be called the wages of monism. In *The Portrait of a Lady,* he tells us, "the aim of being 'exquisite' which the black Osmond quite honestly [Quite honestly indeed!—ask Madame Merle.—I. H.] proffers is completely congruent with Isabel's own aim as a young woman. The point is that only the self-absorbed person can be trapped by the self-absorbed person. . . ." Mr. Anderson's needs may be served by seeing the aims of Osmond and Isabel as "completely congruent"; but how violent a wrenching of the structure of the novel is required to say this, how deep a disregard for the tone of ironic affection that James preserves toward Isabel throughout the book. And how utterly without affection is Mr. Anderson in writing this. For is it really true, and can we suppose Henry James to have thought, that "only the self-absorbed person can be trapped by the self-absorbed person"? One wonders whether, in Mr. Anderson's universe, inexperience—an inexperience that has its pathos as nothing in Osmond can have—figures at all; whether amid the emblems and the churches and the new Jerusalems young girls can't make mistakes through their very moral idealism.

The American Henry James must finally be judged by the standard

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Mr. Anderson himself has proposed in discussing the novelist's father. Not moral system but moral "style" seems to have been the elder James's passion; and Mr. Anderson, in his passion for abstract system, has betrayed the son by transforming his work into a Swedenborgian "church" in which the father's insights lie entombed.

Yet the book itself provides us with an "emblematic theme." We have been taught in recent years—and we have profited greatly from the lesson—that in the apparent madness of much modern criticism there can lie hidden a brilliant and enlightening method. May it not be time to stand that lesson on its head?

Irving Howe

THE DOUBLE THINKER

A PIECE OF MY MIND. By Edmund Wilson. Farrar, Straus & Cudahy. $3.75.

Despite its somewhat menacing title, Mr. Wilson's new book is a harmless enough piece of work. It consists of what appear to be scattered chips from the busy Wilson workshop; and it deals, for the most part, with subjects that Mr. Wilson has explored in far greater detail elsewhere (Russia, religion, the Bible, impressions of Europe, aspects of American cultural history). *A Piece of My Mind* will contain little thematic novelty for those familiar with Mr. Wilson's more recent writings; nor does it, at first sight, appear to have more than a casual unity. This first impression, however, is rather deceptive. For while the individual articles do not in truth have much relation to each other, they all nonetheless express, as one reads them together, the unity of an attitude and a point of view.

Edmund Wilson, as he reminds us in the subtitle ("Reflections at Sixty"), has reached the age of wisdom; and though he writes about subjects which he has approached before as a reporter, a cultural historian or a literary critic, the attitude he now adopts toward them is that of a sage. The present volume, indeed, is pervaded by a reflective and elegiac mood that bathes all the articles, whatever their diversity of subject, in a pensive twilight glow. From his new vantage-point, Mr. Wilson contemplates the past with tenderness, the present with serenity, and the future—how could it be otherwise?—with anxiety and disquiet. But while this intimately personal note gives *A Piece of My Mind* a special place among Edmund Wilson's writings, it also brings into relief

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certain features of his intellectual physiognomy that have not stood out so sharply in the past.

The earliest piece collected in the book is a dialogue ("In the Galapagos") that Mr. Wilson wrote in 1925; he reprints it here because, as he acknowledges, "I still see these problems in the same terms." The two protagonists of the dialogue represent a lazy and indolent sensualism, obviously springing from the revolt against Puritanism, posed against the busy and exhilarating efforts of science to drive toward improvement and perfectibility. "Not the artist nor the saint shall save us," excitedly cries the enthusiastic zoologist to the dozing iguana, "but the scientist—for he alone can perform the calculations and manipulate the tools." And the scientist paints the future in ecstatically visionary terms: "Inhabiting in that day a universe which will itself be a masterpiece of imagination, the speech that we use in our daily life will become more compact and quick, electrically conveying its meanings, and, exulting in our freedom of power, we shall improvise ephemeral songs beside which the lyrical voices of the Beethovens, the Shakespeares and the Dantes—those cries of maladjustment and pain—will seem almost the stammering of barbarians!" The iguana, it is true, falls asleep during this paean, and the reader may well have trouble not doing the same. But though Mr. Wilson pokes a little fun at his scientist in passing, it is the scientist, in the end, who triumphantly carries off the unhappy iguana by force to serve in the experiments that will bring about this Utopia.

Without stretching the symbolism of these figures too far, we may, it seems to me, use them for guidance in exploring the heterogeneous impression derived from Mr. Wilson's pages. Let us imagine that the iguana represents, not only a somnolent sensualism, but also—and there are hints to this effect in the dialogue itself—a feeling for the special uniqueness of human experience. The iguana respects and cherishes all those recurring emotional and spiritual preoccupations that give to man his specifically human stamp, and which, whatever his Neanderthal ancestor may have been like, do not seem to have changed much since the beginning of historical time. The permanence of these preoccupations still enables the great art and literature of the past, sometimes thousands of years old, to enter and re-enter the context of human experience—not only as historical documents, but as a source of vital and constantly renewed insight into the human condition. No one has contributed more than Edmund Wilson to keeping these insights and these values alive; it is because Mr. Wilson has so much of the iguana in him that he has written so much good literary criticism and so much perceptive cultural history.

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As for the scientist—well, he sounds a good deal more like H. G. Wells than like either Newton or Einstein; but his name, especially in the United States, is legion. The scientist, as Mr. Wilson conceives him, is the fellow who has a quick solution, a gimmick, for everything; and who *does* have a gimmick for so many things that it would be sheer stupidity to underestimate either his efficacy or his usefulness. But the scientist, in addition, is convinced that he can find a quick answer to the problems that have always bothered the iguana; while the truth is that he does not really understand these problems at all. There is no quick solution to the problems expressed by Shakespeare, Dante and Beethoven; there is no solution at all in any sense that science would recognize; and this is why the scientist will never entirely replace the artist or the saint. Now Mr. Wilson, so far as he sympathizes with his version of the scientist, cannot help regretting this state of affairs. And the result is that, while he poses a number of cultural and human problems with all the fine feeling for complexity that we expect of the iguana, he all too often proposes pre-emptory solutions to them with all the bumptiousness of his scientist.

Perhaps the most striking illustration of this propensity occurs in the section on sex, which, as a matter of fact, is closely related to what Mr. Wilson has to say on education. In this latter section he explains—with all his admirable and unobtrusive erudition—the value of Judaic studies, the disadvantages of beginning the study of Latin with Caesar, and his profound shock when, during a spell of teaching, he encountered at first hand the disastrous breakdown of American education that is gradually beginning to penetrate the national consciousness. Later, in the section on sex, he brings up the problem of creating and training an elite, which at bottom is also a problem of education; and the fact that Mr. Wilson should evoke this most crucial of all problems for a democracy is a welcome proof of his freedom from cant. But now he has become fascinated with biology, and the old enthusiasm of the scientist sweeps away all precautions.

"The pretensions of aristocracies," he writes, "though never entirely justified, were never perhaps entirely false; but that road seems forever closed. A possible new method has already appeared in artificial insemination. I find at the county fairs of the dairy country of upstate New York that the semen of prize bulls is now advertised and sold like any other agricultural commodity." But artificial insemination, Mr. Wilson acknowledges, probably would be used by humans only in exceptional cases. The movement he envisages "might well begin with a bureau which should ask for volunteers for the breeding of a new elite and which should make a selection among them based on both

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intellectual and physical equipment." Mr. Wilson only foresees objections to his plan from dewy-eyed defenders of "romantic love"; and he presents his own idea with a jaunty iconoclasm that reveals his satisfaction at rising superior to such sentimental nonsense. So far as "romantic love" represents a respect for the dignity of the individual, however (his or her right to decide for himself one of the most important questions of life) it is by no means as ridiculous as Mr. Wilson would have us believe. Of course it has degenerated into a Hollywood cliché, and is susceptible, like all freedoms, of considerable abuse; but here we may turn one of Mr. Wilson's arguments against himself. That his own idea has led to the biological perversions of Hitlerism he does not consider a decisive objection: a good idea can always be misused. The same applies to "romantic love," with the addendum that it has far less dangerous possibilities than Mr. Wilson's pseudo-scientific "selection."

This, to be sure, is the most horrendous example of the scientist riding roughshod over the iguana. But, though nothing so extreme occurs again, there are other evidences scattered here and there of the same tendency—for example when Mr. Wilson discusses the cause of war. It is no longer the prize bulls that fascinate him here but the birds, the bees, the butterflies and the ants; for he thinks (quite wrongly) that modern philosophy tends to make man far too much of a reasonable creature, and that, if we turn to entomology for enlightenment, we might be better able to understand our own actions. As a sample of such enlightenment, he paints this picture of the American state of mind in the early years of the second World War: "The middle-aged newspaper reader sat at home with a certain complacency, looking on while the Germans and the Russians were buzzing out at one another, unaware that our high-flying American insects were itching to buzz out, too; that the Japanese insects were itching, and that these would soon give us a pretext [?] for taking part in the general field day." So much for the tangle of passions and prejudices, interests and ideals that lead human beings to go to war! To do Mr. Wilson justice, one should add that this passage probably owes more to his incorrigible isolationism than to any seriously held convictions about history. Certainly, as we know from his splendid essay on Lincoln, he has not written this way in the past about wars with whose issues he could humanly identify himself.

Now that we have exhibited so much of Mr. Wilson the scientist, it is only fair that we indicate those aspects of the present book where his iguana side manages to hold its own. One of the iguana's most impressive affirmations occurs in the shrewd and amusing sketch, "The

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Messiah at the Seder," in which Mr. Wilson endows the iguana with the voice of God Himself. For when a "run-of-the-mill child prodigy" from Brooklyn leaves atomic bomb research to proclaim himself the Messiah, the Lord chides him for having expected to have any quick success. And when, swallowing his resentment, the would-be Messiah asks the Lord for advice—now that Judgment Day seems a very remote possibility—the Lord answers: " 'Go back to your old work,' said the Voice. 'Go on raising money for Israel. Maybe some good will come of it.' " These tones of chastened wisdom are the very accents of the iguana; and it is significant that, when Mr. Wilson touches on art in this conversation, he takes some ironic thrusts at the attempt of small-scale Messiahs to liquidate its problems by fiat.

"Why, there's even a music expert—a disciple of Rabbi Schoenberg —who wants to exclude from Redemption all the modern composers who don't practice the pure twelve-tone system. . . . There's even a literary critic—a rabbi himself, with his own disciples—who says that he can't run the danger of finding himself assigned to a category which might include certain critics who don't subscribe to his doctrine. The core of that doctrine is that—evaluating in moral terms—there are only five novelists in English whose work can be taken seriously." Here, one might say, Mr. Wilson's own ox is being gored by his prize bull—but now working for Rabbi Leavis. And, as we see, Mr. Wilson does not buy the gimmick when it manhandles matters in which he is vitally and personally concerned.

Indeed, the most enlightening pages of the present volume are those in which we feel Mr. Wilson himself most intimately engaged; naturally enough, these pages deal with American cultural matters in general and Mr. Wilson's personal history in particular. It is never superfluous to remind Americans, as Mr. Wilson takes occasion to do, that "the United States has not been exempt from the appetites that led to the conquests of Nebuchadnezzar's Nineveh, Caesar's Rome or Bonaparte's France." To control these appetites, there is only that tradition on which Mr. Wilson puts his finger when he refers to those who feel that "beyond their opportunities for money-making, they have a stake in the success of our system, that they share the responsibility to carry on its institutions, to find expression for its new point of view, to give it dignity, to make it work." This whole analysis of "republican patriotism" is an excellent example of Mr. Wilson's "feel" for historical nuance and national diversity (though when he remarks that Europeans have trouble understanding such patriotism, his Anglophobia gets the better of his historical sense).

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These pages take on their full significance, however, only when we read them along with his moving tribute to his father. For the elder Wilson, who came to manhood in the robber-baron period after the Civil War, and who suffered from neurotic depressions because of "his lack of objectives in life," nonetheless managed to uphold this American tradition in his own way. He was "a crack trial lawyer" who sometimes worked for large corporations, but who helped his neighbors for little or nothing when they got a raw deal. He was a staunch Republican who once served as Attorney-General of New Jersey; but his strongest ally in attempting to improve local education was a Jew from Czechoslovakia who had originally come to New Jersey as a peddler. One of his closest cronies was the editor of the local Socialist newspaper, with whom he took long walks because his wife would not allow this disreputable character in her house. When Edmund Wilson came home from the First World War, he was surprised to find his father, staunch Republican though he was, indignant over the persecution of the Socialists and Communists. "I had been so full of Wells and Shaw and Barbusse and the Russian Revolution that I was only learning now from my father what the principles of American justice were."

These same principles prevented Edmund Wilson in the '30s, for all his sympathy with Marxism, from ever becoming the dupe of the dialectic. It is these same principles that we feel him asserting now when he protests against the stupidities of Congress in censoring textbooks with pictures of the Dust Bowl; or when he inveighs against the barbarities of our passport policy—matched, to our shame, by no other even semi-civilized country except Soviet Russia. Once we locate Edmund Wilson in this American context, we realize that even his stubborn and cranky scientism has a long and honorable history in the lonely fight against bigotry and prejudice that sought emotional relief in dreams of a scientific millennium. And we also realize that, as an important influence on the education of the American intelligentsia over the past thirty years, Edmund Wilson takes a distinguished place among those who have carried on the American heritage exemplified by his father. For the ex-bohemian of the '20s, the semi-Marxist of the '30s, the omniscient and cosmopolitan literary critic, war correspondent and student of religions of the '40s and '50s now reveals himself, in his "Reflections at Sixty," for what he has been in reality all along—one of the staunchest pillars of the Republic. Long may he stand!

Joseph Frank

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POETRY CHRONICLE

HOWL. By Allen Ginsberg. The City Lights Bookshop. $.75.
IN DEFENSE OF THE EARTH. By Kenneth Rexroth. New Directions. $3.00.
NEW AND SELECTED POEMS. By Kenneth Fearing. Indiana University Press. $3.95.
COLLECTED POEMS. By Kathleen Raine. Random House. $3.50.
IN THE ROSE OF TIME. By Robert Fitzgerald. New Directions. $3.00.
LETTER FROM A DISTANT LAND. By Philip Booth. Viking. $3.00.
GREEN WITH BEASTS. By W. S. Merwin. Knopf. $3.50.

There is so much prefatory and dedicatory fuss and bother attached to all but the three nicest and best of these books that it is tempting to dive right into the churning manifestoes, leaving the poems to the passing mention that might be afforded to a landscape. In the case of Messrs. Rexroth, Fearing and Ginsberg, however, the poems themselves bring us very close to the brink of the bald polemic that heralds their appearance. Miss Raine's Thoughts on Being Collected amount to little more than special pleading on behalf of her etherealized Oh-So-Universal Muse, our actual acquaintance with whom, in the poems which follow, adds little to what was known of her from the description preceding. Perhaps this is only to say that all the above-mentioned poets know exactly what they are doing, and what they want to do. Leaving Miss Raine out of it for the moment (she is English and a lady, and the controversy I am thinking of seems to be peculiar to domestic males), it might be observed that the other three all line up fairly well against polite and academic poetry, that lifeless and conformist style of the '50s now falling into disgrace wherever barricades seem wanting. To say that they are all writing in dispraise of respectability would be a little misleading. Mr. Fearing is deeply concerned with Integrity and Honesty and resisting the demoralizing power of the Investigators. This is surely a respectable position. Mr. Rexroth tries a little harder to be conventionally unrespectable, abusing the shade of Martial, whom he invokes in justification of some not very funny epigrams that self-consciously call attention to their own use of dirty words. But for all Rexroth's introductory disavowals of professors and neo-conservatives, "corn belt metaphysicals and country gentlemen," he seems willing enough to pay homage to academicism and literary and social decorum as long as it occurs in another language (preferably Japanese).

It is only fair to Allen Ginsberg, however, to remark on the utter

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lack of decorum of any kind in his dreadful little volume. I believe that the title of his long poem, "Howl," is meant to be a noun, but I can't help taking it as an imperative. The poem itself is a confession of the poet's faith, done into some 112 paragraph-like lines, in the ravings of a lunatic friend (to whom it is dedicated), and in the irregularities in the lives of those of his friends who populate his rather disturbed pantheon. Here is the poem's beginning:

I saw the best minds of my generation destroyed by madness,
starving hysterical naked,
dragging themselves through the negro streets at dawn looking for
an angry fix,
angelheaded hipsters burning for the ancient heavenly connection
to the starry dynamo in the machinery of night,
who poverty and tatters and hollow-eyed and high sat up smoking
in the supernatural darkness of cold-water flats floating
across the tops of cities contemplating jazz,
who bared their brains to Heaven under the El and saw Mohammedan
angels staggering on tenement roofs illuminated,
who passed through universities with radiant cool eyes hallucinating
Arkansas and Blake-light tragedy among the scholars of war,
who were expelled from the academies for crazy publishing
obscene odes on the windows of the skull . . .

This continues, sponging on one's toleration, for pages and pages. A kind of climax was reached for me, in a long section of screams about "Moloch!", at a rare point of self-referential lucidity: "Dreams! adorations! illuminations! religions! the whole boatload of sensitive bullshit!" *Howl* seems to have emerged under the influence of a kind of literary *Festspiel* held at frequent intervals on the West Coast, in the course of which various poets, "with radiant cool eyes," undoubtedly, read their works before audiences of writhing and adoring youths. "Howl" and the other longer poems in this book, including "America," "Sunflower Sutra," "In the Baggage Room at Greyhound" and some dismal pastiches of William Carlos Williams (who wrote a brief reminiscence of the poet to introduce this volume), all proclaim, in a hopped-up and improvised tone, that nothing seems to be worth saying save in a hopped-up and improvised tone. There are also avowed post-Poundian pacts with Walt Whitman and Apollinaire, and perhaps an unacknowledged one with Lautréamont. I don't know; Mr. Ginsberg prefaces *Howl* with a long dedication to some of his fellow-writers that reads just like his poems ("To . . . William Seward Burroughs, author of

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Naked Lunch, an endless novel which will drive everybody mad"), and in the book he alludes to a "spontaneous bop prosody." Perhaps this is as good a characterization of his work as any.

I have spent this much time on a very short and very tiresome book for two reasons. The first of these is involved with the fact that Mr. Ginsberg and his circle are being given a certain amount of touting by those who disapprove of what Horace Gregory, writing in these pages last fall, christened "The Poetry of Suburbia." If it turns out to be to anybody's profit, I shouldn't be a bit surprised if *Howl* and its eventual progeny were accorded some milder version of the celebration Colin Wilson has received in England. This may not be a real danger, however. If it suddenly appeared that there were no possible worlds between suburbia and subterranea, I expect most of us would go underground. But this is not quite yet the case, and the publicity seems regrettable, in view of the fact (my second reason for dealing with him here) that Allen Ginsberg has a real talent and a marvelous ear. It shows up in some of the funniest and most grotesque lines of "Howl," and even without knowing his profound and carefully organized earlier writing (unpublished in book form), one might suspect a good poet lurking behind the modish façade of a frantic and *talentlos* avant-garde.

The same might be said of all the poems in *Howl* as was remarked in a recent film, upon a doting eulogy of a heel by one of his toadies: "Phony, but sincere." I wish that I could say at least this much for Kenneth Rexroth's "Thou Shalt Not Kill," a shrill elegy for Dylan Thomas in over 300 lines—by far the longest poem in his new book. "They are murdering all the young men," it starts out, and after a lengthy succession of more or less general indictments, gets down to more pointed accusations. It seems, from an *ubi sunt* section replete with conventional medieval refrain, that every dead poet of recent memory was, in some unspecified way, a victim of murder, and that *"You"* are the culprit. But it is only in the final pages that we arrive at the murder of Dylan Thomas and the naming of his killers:

Who killed the bright-headed bird?
You did, you son of a bitch.
You drowned him in your cocktail brain.
He fell down and died in your synthetic heart.
You killed him,
Oppenheimer the Million-Killer,
You killed him,

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Einstein the Gray Eminence.
You killed him,
Havanahavana, with your Nobel Prize.

Too much of the remainder of *In Defense of the Earth* is almost as idiotic as this. There are some unexciting translations from Japanese and Classic poets, who fare slightly better than Lorca and Dunbar in the murder poem in that they are not summoned up to pass judgment; there is a bestiary, some travestied Mother Goose pieces, some short cycles of poems, and perhaps twenty others. The overall effect struck me as being like that of a do-it-yourself home literature kit, with Mr. Rexroth's standardized, gratuitously arranged short lines serving as the prefabricated parts. Even in the sequence of poems "For Marthe, My Wife," which I tried to like for their genuine homeliness, the arbitrary arrangement of sentences into lines disturbed me somewhat, and I felt that no rearrangement of line structure would either add or detract from the simple declarative statement of Mr. Rexroth's verse that it is indeed verse that we are reading.

I remember admiring Kenneth Fearing's carefree and sentimental

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manner once, and I turned with slightly more than nostalgic interest to his *New and Selected Poems* to see what had happened to it. Not very much has; Mr. Fearing has continued to produce his fragments of WPA Theatre shooting-script, his jazzy observations for easy reading, his Character pieces in the manner of a hep Carl Sandburg, with an unflagging devotion to GETTING THE POINT ACROSS. The earliest of the poems in this book may well have been written when I was very young; certainly many of them were written during the heyday of Norman Corwin's radio successes, and right now they strike me as very much the same sort of thing. They are not as vulgar, however, and if I find their hopeful candor a little inadequate, it is only in the sense that I now find that my own view of the world, dating from high-school days and my unspoiled appreciation of poems like "Dirge," simply will not do any more. The only saddening thing is to realize that Mr. Fearing's style, use of format, and hardened but warm-hearted old City Editor tone have all been most effectively adopted, and put to every conceivable kind of purpose, by those very manipulators of mass-communications that are pilloried in his fifteen-page introduction on "Reading, Writing and the Rackets."

Kathleen Raine's *Collected Poems* pose a different kind of problem for the reviewer, especially for one who, like myself, has never been more than a casual reader of her work. Miss Raine's reputation in her native country is, I understand, quite high; she is particularly praised for an almost mystical generality of subject and purity of language that I find myself wanting to call more ascetic than properly chaste. In her introduction, she informs us that she has excluded from her collection of her work of nearly fifteen years all poems specifically religious, those concerned with love, "and a third order that also belongs to the transient and not the imaginative order, poems descriptive of events in time and place as such . . . that now seem as dead as any other journalism." Remaining are over a hundred and twenty incantations on timeless and universal themes, but by far the bulk of them slipped through my transient grasp. They are all full of traditional arcana—the four elements, Druidical trees, religious mysteries—but they never seem to be anchored to much of Miss Raine's own experience. Their general effect is somewhat like that of all the incomplete sentences in the literary remains of the pre-Socratics. Perhaps I should have had very different things to say of a volume composed of the poems excluded from this collection. A few pieces like "Optical Illusion" and "The Speech of Birds" gave glimpses of an intelligence that had more to expound than it thought was serious, or proper, or general enough;

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and I particularly liked a delicate little epigram called "The End of Love," which seems to evade the abstractions of its imagery and thus to redeem another kind of interest. But in general, I find Miss Raine's book uninteresting.

In the Rose of Time, Robert Fitzgerald's collected poetry of the past twenty-five years, is a very fine book, and I liked best in it the more ambitious poems, "First Movement," "Georgic," "Celestine," "In the Glass," and the final piece, "History." If Mr. Fitzgerald's diction owes any debt to Pound or to Stevens, both debts demand only a nod of acknowledgment for having pointed out a direction rather than specific paths. Several dominant modes may be heard in the mature poems in the book. The least successful one is a little folksy, and breaks out in "The Imprisoned," "Cinema," and "Cobb Would Have Caught It"; then there is the satiric voice of "Winter Quarters," "Patruus," and some of the other shorter pieces which come off much better, it seems to me, than large portions of Pound's *Propertius.* But throughout the book it is the elegiac mode that keeps getting better and better and better. I should like to quote all of "History," but the closing section will have to do to show the success of Mr. Fitzgerald's more relaxed and speculative diction even when it is being oracular:

A man, this man,
Bred among lakes and railway cars and smoke,
The salt of childhood on his wintry lips,
His full heart ebbing toward the new tide
Arriving, arriving in laughter and cries,
Down the chaotic dawn and eastern drift,
Would hail the unforeseen, and celebrate
On the great mountainside those sprites,
Tongues of delight, that may remember him—
The yet unborn, trembling in the same rooms,
Breakfasting before the same grey windows,
Lying, grieving again; yet all beyond him,
Who knew he lived in rough Jehovah's breath,
And burned, a quiet wick in a wild night,
Loving what he beheld and will behold.

The verse in Philip Booth's first book, *Letter from a Distant Land,* is, in general, carefully ground without being over-faceted; its disposition toward heavy speech-stress governing shorter lines than might be expected and arranged in tight stanzas serves his pastoral subjects well.

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He writes mostly of New England, but his mode is earnest rather than shrewd (the city poems like "Cold Water Flat" and "Tenement Roof" are among the less successful ones). One of the best things about this style is that when it doesn't seem to be working quite right, the effect is neither silly nor flat, but only a little spasmodic. "Storm in a Formal Garden" I found to be one of the finest poems in the book, but the opening sentence has this slightly misplaced Dylan Thomas stagger to it; it is only at the end of the stanza that the right key seems to be there:

Where my struck mother stays,
she wakes to thunderstorms
of doubt. Squalls blacken
her bright-surfaced dreams,
and she stands coldly shaken,
lost in the dripping trees.

And this is the key of the wonderful later stanzas like this one:

Weeds like conscience clog
my rake. My mother craves
more love than any son
can give. And I, with leaves
jammed on a sharpened tine,
sweat where my two hearts tug.

It is this tone of voice, showing up in poems as different as "Twelfth Night," "Barred Islands" and the *felix culpa* poem, "Original Sequence," that I like best in Mr. Booth's work, and in these poems, as in "The Margin," "Polaris," and "The Seiners," he seems both assured and impressive. Elsewhere, he sometimes tends toward either the unnecessary ingenuity of the comparison between dragonflies and a searching helicopter in "The Lost Boy," or the prolixity of parts of the title poem, which is a letter to Thoreau and is longer than any other piece in the book. But any hard-working first book like this one (it was the Lamont Poetry Selection for 1956, by the way) is bound to have many of the faults of tentativeness, faults which subsequent work may demonstrate were embryonic virtues.

W. S. Merwin's *Green with Beasts* contains so much that is brilliant and profound that I tend to forget all my reservations about its occasional lapses. Some of the smaller poems in it leave me feeling restless and unsatisfied; on rereading the wonderful "Mountain," I found a few passages disfigured by a kind of coyness; I regret that Mr. Merwin

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did not see fit to include more of his animal poems in the "Physiologus" section at the beginning (the formidable piece called "Bull" should be there). But I also regret that the book is not twice its length. Since the appearance of his second volume of poetry less than three years ago, Mr. Merwin has written a tremendous amount, and in gradually abandoning the Romance models that seemed to lie behind much of his earlier work, has emerged with an intense and thoughtful style, quite new and quite his own. It is a style that is always as rewarding as its subject, and when turned upon problems of habit and knowledge in poems like "White Goat, White Ram," "The Mountain," "The Prodigal Son," and "Learning a Dead Language," for example, the result is always considerable and often superb. It seems to flourish best in these long, terribly intelligent, reflective poems; of the shorter ones, the "Saint Sebastian" is certainly the most startling and, I feel, the best:

So many times I have felt them come, Lord,
The arrows (a coward dies often), so many times,
And worse, oh worse often than this. Neither breeze nor bird
Stirring the hazed peace through which the day climbs.

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And slower even than the arrows, the few sounds that come
Falling, as across water, from where farther off than the hills
The archers move in a different world in the same
Kingdom. Oh, can the noise of angels,

The beat and whirring between Thy kingdoms
Be even by such cropped feathers raised? Not though
With the wings of morning may I fly from Thee; for it is

Thy kingdom where (and the wind so still now)
I stand in pain; and, entered with pain as always,
Thy kingdom that on these erring shafts comes.

I think that Mr. Merwin is in many ways the most interesting poet of his generation; he may very well turn out to be the best one. In any event, *Green with Beasts* is a book for which I am truly grateful.

John Hollander

A CHARACTER WRECKED BY SUCCESS

THE ORGANIZATION MAN. By William H. Whyte, Jr. Simon & Schuster. $5.00.

No one has yet improved upon the peroration delivered by Max Weber against American culture. In the final paragraphs of *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism,* Weber writes of the Protestant—read "American"—who has pursued salvation and won wealth. Having created, through his energy, a world of abundance, the moral athlete grows flabby and complacent in it. His prosperity, stripped of its religious and ethical meaning, becomes a plush cage. "No one knows who will live in this cage in the future, or whether at the end of this tremendous development entirely new prophets will arise, or there will be a great rebirth of old ideas and ideals, or, if neither, mechanized petrifaction, embellished with a sort of convulsive self-importance. For of the last stage of this cultural development, it might truly be said: 'Specialists without spirit, sensualists without heart; this nullity imagines that it has attained a level of civilization never before achieved.'" No Catholic, no socialist, has launched a more prophetic attack on the moral foundations of Western industrial culture than this German liberal. Of course, a Catholic polemicist would find Weber's

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thesis perfectly compatible with his own anti-Reformation bias. For it is Weber's thesis that the restless, anxiety-ridden Protestant, always in quest of evidence of his salvation, was transformed by the very success of his quest into a very different, and now dominant, type—the competent technician who becomes, after hours, the dull sensual man.

Thus, the Protestant, having discovered how to snatch plenty out of a world of scarcity, and even how to produce a world of plenty, nevertheless lost himself amid his goods and buried his culture under it. It is "this nullity" of the capitalist spirit, now entirely divorced from the Protestant ethic, that William Whyte explores. He is a brilliant and chivalrous journalist, and he withholds censure wherever he can. Whyte has written a sympathetic and remarkably full account of the American moral athlete in premature middle age. But his unfailing generosity as a critic cannot hide the fact that the American character has been fatally damaged. After three centuries of heroic struggle against an economy of scarcity, the American character has caved in just at the threshold of an economy of abundance. It is a national character Freud would have delighted to analyze: a character wrecked by success. Whyte's Organization Man is still mainly Protestant on Sundays, but without the moral egoism, the heroic self-centeredness that once characterized him on the other six days. The pious smile of sociability, once reserved for women and younger children and ministers, has frozen on the American face. Americans smile too readily. And when they smile, it is no longer to bare their teeth in fraternal greeting to a competing athlete met in the race. The smile does not crack our faces, for the remainder of the American face has been composed around the smile. Sociability, like predestination, is an iron creed. The American must smile, or risk challenging the sacramental bond that unites him in one overpoweringly friendly people. In that wide, ever-ready smile the material abundance of America may be said to be transsubstantiated into the personality of the American.

It is well known that the American is a joiner of Organizations. He works for them, he plays in them. In a culture of joiners, the line between 'community' and 'organization' grows vague, particularly as the joiners move more and more frequently from one community to another while remaining in the same organization. Thus one's native organization receives some of the reverence once reserved for one's native community. That the subjects of Whyte's study tend increasingly to remain in the same organization while becoming geographically ever more mobile is one of the many interesting correlations he adduces in a convincing way. Regionalism may be ignored as a factor in shaping the new American character. Suburbia, and the employees of the great

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oligopolies that people it, knows no Yankees, no Southerners, no Plainsmen. Park Forest (Illinois) and Levittown (New York) are enough alike sociologically to make the geographic difference unimportant.

The sanctity of the Organization derives from the fact that it is the trustee of American prosperity. And prosperity is, in turn, the historical successor to the Protestant conscience. (Americans do in fact believe that what is good for General Motors is good for the country. Secretary Wilson simply cannot learn that private truths must not be spoken in public places.) The Organization—the business organization in particular—leads the American male firmly up the mountain of temptation, and trains him to accept, with thanks, all the suburban kingdoms of this world. Salvation has been worked out in the personnel office; one need only conform to the benevolent will of the Organization. With patience and prudence (and an expanding economy), the Organization Man may confidently expect to arrive at his final destination—the home office and the senior dormitory suburb.

Whyte is half admiring, half shocked at our imaginary fall upwards into the good life. In this respect, his ambivalence is similar to that of other fascinated reporters of this curious fall—David Riesman, for example. It is not the good life that Whyte suspects. Like Riesman, he cherishes a secret nostalgia, not for scarcity, but for that contentious moral athleticism of the Protestant type. From the vantage point of this nostalgia, Whyte gauges the supine hedonism of the American temper today, implying that some higher temperature is still possible in our present-centered culture. Perhaps it is, in rare cases. But because, like Riesman, he is a hopeful man, Whyte does not emphasize how thoroughly unfit the American environment is for a recreation of Protestant ruthlessness—personified as 'autonomous' man or under any other guise. The world-rejection that underlies the Protestant style of individuality is not a viable attitude today. Even the ongoing religious 'revival' in America is a further world-acceptance—the acceptance of 'religion' as another national good to which all Americans are entitled. Having begun to get religion, the American is reaching toward the point where he has everything.

To Whyte, as to Riesman, the future of American culture revolves mainly around the question of rehabilitating the individual. Whyte assumes, with the old Protestant Ethic, that there is a core in every person—unique, incommunicable, indestructible. Further, he assumes that, thus endowed, the person is not exhausted by the social relations into which he must enter, no matter how exhaustively these relations enter into him. Here Whyte has the authority of contemporary social

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science against him. For every prevailing science of society contains, built into it, a denial—however implicit and unexamined that denial may be—that there is a self which exists prior to, and is not a derivative of, social experience. It is at least questionable whether such an authentic individual still lives, secretly, inside the Organization Man, except perhaps in the not very helpful way that a thin man may be said to live inside every fat man. Whyte may be appealing to a mythological creature, not merely to one which harkens back to a different mythological environment.

To profit from a reading of Whyte's book, however, one need not believe that an invisible church of individuals still exists. His assumptions about individuality seem to me, as a sociologist, somewhat dubious; yet once past his assumptions and into his descriptions, his book remains very sound sociology. He has a fine eye for noting those suburban social disciplines—the *Kaffee-klatches,* the amateur psychologizing, the institution of the open front door—which repress individuality in the name of democracy. And he describes equally well the organizational glad hands that hover, with a power like that of apostolic succession, over the heads of the young ordinands entering the corporate hierarchies.

Whyte does not attempt to say why the aura of sanctity around big business organization has enlarged in the postwar decade. Nor does he explain why all organizations, in particular the trade unions, have tended to take on this aura. A correct answer to this sort of question would, I think, erase much of Whyte's neat analytic line between the sociable Organization Man and the Protestant egoist. The Social Ethic is not so different from the Protestant Ethic as Whyte makes out. In both instances, the practical aim is the same: success. The conditions of success have changed, and therefore the character traits that are at a premium for success have also changed. But the end has not changed. That same sensual man against whom Weber inveighed, able to work as devotedly as the Protestant without the same incitement, has been further organized into new methodical routines of self-advancement. The ethical egoism of the Protestant has flowered into unremitting sociability, under the sunlight of an expanding economy. And it is not at all clear that the Organization Man does not have a certain ethical advantage over his ruthless Protestant predecessor. He mixes more pleasure with his business, and takes his pleasures in a less furtive way. He has regard for his health. He is kind to his children. He is reasonably happy. He is a far more civil creature.

Perhaps the most interesting material in Whyte's book is on the straitjacket of tests into which applied psychology is trying to fit the

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Organization Man. Here, with good reason, the author grows vehement and polemical. It is difficult to remain even-tempered when regarding the tyranny of applied psychology over the American business community. Yet, as I have implied, Whyte's is no simple-minded work of protest. Puritanism had a moral theology that left open the possibility of purchasing Christ with money; against this possibility, which opened into a secular and sensual culture, the great divines of New England thundered futilely. The Organization Man has a moral psychology, wrapped inside the flag of science, against which the moral critics of our time may thunder with equal futility. Whyte senses this futility of moralizing with the system. He does not recommend that his readers fight the application of psychology directly. Instead, he offers some lessons in how to deprive this pseudo-science, not of its capacity to label us, but of its capacity to persuade us that its labels are true.

Industrial psychology represents the supreme ambition of modern science: it carries technology into the inner world, to transform and control it as the outer world can now be transformed and controlled. What the American once did to the wilderness of physical nature, he now moves to do to the tameness of his human nature. The pursuit of power is an integral part of the American's creed, informing his pursuit

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of happiness. This covert part of the creed illuminates the national eagerness for education. In America, knowledge as such has never meant power. Rather, the Baconian idea has been turned upside down. In the pseudo-science developed in university departments of psychology and applied in the corporations, we see power masquerading as knowledge. Industrial psychology represents power trying to transform itself into knowledge—in order to achieve more power.

It was a bold idea to end the book with an analysis of psychological tests and detailed instructions on how to cheat on them. Whyte's recommendations are genuinely subversive—that is, they are practical, not rhetorical. The free man must learn how to cheat power masquerading as knowledge. He must cultivate that double consciousness which permits the Organization to mount a plausible version of himself in the bureaucratic showcase without for a moment believing that the mounted creature is really he. This is an unending task, I think, one requiring more than shrewdness and perhaps beyond the resources of individuality latent in Organization Man. But if Whyte is not entirely successful in supplying a new hero, there is no doubt that he has correctly spotted, in applied psychology, the new villain for our national success story.

Philip Rieff

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VARIETY

NOTES ON TV

The Resistance is giving up, morosely and unsung. One's last die-hard friends are succumbing, one by one, to the combined blandishments of Junior, the educators' endorsements, and the surprising allure of addled eggheads exhibiting themselves on various quiz programs. The saturation point has almost been reached with television in 39,230,000 homes (some with more than one set!), a figure representing 79 per cent of the families in this country. Knowing this, some big manufacturers of sets are announcing further layoffs and curtailed production.

The industry itself seems to be in a state of conscious or semi-conscious reappraisal. The major policy and administrative shake-ups in at least two networks (NBC and ABC) during the last few months caused a mighty *frisson* to run through the hierarchies of all the networks, and fomented even more frenzied campaigns for "ratings." The incredible vocabulary proliferated by television continues to signify intentions rather than things, but in the metaphysically draughty realm of Futuramas and Spectaculars (the latter a term coined by the late Mr. Weaver), the astronomical budgets have not been pared down: about a half-million last year for "Peter Pan," live and in color, as opposed to $620,000 for that recent bust, "Mayerling," also live and in color, which even the most fawning of the TV "critics" found wanting.

The whole issue, incidentally, of a serious, responsible and pragmatic television criticism has yet to be thought out at even the most rudimentary level. What passes for television criticism at the moment ranges from the flip, gossipy opinions of John Crosby in the New York *Herald Tribune* to the hortatory, semi-editorial pronouncements of Jack Gould in the New York *Times,* both the best of their respective kind, but it is badly written and utterly rudderless in terms of aesthetic moorings, either in the way of background and taste, or in the way of empirically derived values of *the possible* in this medium. There is, at quite a different level of engagement, the thoughtful if somewhat old-fashioned writing of Gilbert Seldes in a book like *The Public Arts.* Unfortunately, however, in his weekly television columns in the *Saturday Review* Seldes is given over to a generalizing habit rather than to the grubby work of careful *ad hoc* discriminations which television so sorely wants. Even worse,

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he is the victim of delusory notions about the inherent potential of television. A recent article of his ends:

> . . . the chance now for television to develop itself—rather than exploiting its predecessors—is doubly critical, for *if it succeeds it will become a great art*—and save itself from starting another treadmill to oblivion.

The italics are mine and for a purpose. Television is a medium of communication and as such only a possible channel (no pun intended) for great art; it can no more be "a great art" than the cinema, although there are great works in that medium. It is not just a semantic quibble to insist that there be no loose talk about television as a great art of the future. That is to delude ourselves about two things: the nature of the medium and the possible uses and development of that nature.

A contrary mystique about television has been generated largely by intellectuals and film-makers (two more or less mutually exclusive classes) to the effect that it is an instrument of the devil, inherently evil and operatively corrupting in its abuse of intelligence and neglect of art. It is an attack very like that of some poets a decade ago upon "Science" and the "Atomic Age." Remembering Hiroshima, they projected a diabolism into a kind of knowledge, rather than judging as good or bad the uses to which it was put. At the moment what is needed for television is neither doomsaying nor hosannahs of jubilation about its chancey future shape. What is needed, and desperately, by people in the trade, by the viewers, and *au fond* by the "critics" is a hard, realistic sense of what the medium can do, what its limits are, technically, sociologically, and aesthetically and where it connects with rather than usurps (as it is increasingly evident that it is not likely to) the place of other media such as books, newspapers, and motion pictures for entertaining and informing people. I have conscientiously not used the term "art" to describe these media and I shall as sternly eschew it for television. And the same for the criticism of television. All significant criticism is *post hoc*, when it isn't post mortem. Criticism cannot legislate, although it sometimes tries to. It can only observe and judge what already

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exists. Critics (the Chicago School and television critics alike) often forget that Aristotle wrote the Poetics *after* studying the Greek tragedies.

Flatly put, television cannot become "a great art" nor is it likely to produce much great art. But that is not to write it off. Anyone who has reached the age of five in this country knows that, for better or worse, television is here to stay. A whole new generation of more exacting viewers may yet spring from the present devotees of "Lassie" and "Robin Hood." Where our generation could see a movie at best once a week or for special treats, the present one sees television shows mornings, afternoons, evenings, at home and in school. Boredom, carping, and even the contempt which familiarity is said to breed are inevitable. Television may be a drug, as its opponents maintain, but it is a mild one to which a remarkable tolerance can be built up. Eventually, like the chronic aspirin-taker, the drugged viewer becomes inured to the effect of it all and demands something else, not necessarily better but different. But this will all take time, so much time that the initiative for better programs will have to come from another source than that vast undifferentiated mass, the "viewer." Forms (or perhaps one should say formulae) do not die easily, as witness the incredible devotion of the viewer to the "acts" on Ed Sullivan's show—the very trapeze and hoop-balancing turns that used so to embarrass me as a child at Keith's Vaudeville of a Saturday afternoon.

The harsh reality is that television is a limited medium and that no amount of ingenuity in the way of technical improvements over some present features like the small screen or the poor quality of reproduction in the color-receiving sets will change the nature of the *given* in the medium itself. The color possibilities of television have been much overtouted both by the industry and by well-meaning but unthoughtful laymen. Color, per se, is only an addition to what is already implicit in the medium; it in no way *changes* what can be done with the medium just as technicolor or other color processes did not change the nature of the motion pictures. At best, color can en-

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hance, enrich and delight; at worst, it distracts from and mocks reality. As for the screen, let us say it may eventually pull down to cover the wall of a room, or, as has been suggested, merely utilize a blank wall. What then? Will ballet, at the moment possibly the least satisfactory of almost any televised material, improve? I doubt it. The limited spatial capacities of both the camera's eye and the diminutiveness of the screen are such that the effect of *wholeness* which is integral to the aesthetic power of ballet is lost and the viewer is expected to be content with mutilations of anatomy and movement: you see the ballerina's feet but you do not see her legs and thighs; you see her legs but you don't see her torso or head; you see a truncated, smiling face and weaving arms but you have no idea what the rest of the body is doing. Dancers are cut off from one another, and the interaction of parts in an encompassing pattern is sacrificed for close-ups of individual pirouettes or *pas jetés* as if they were executed in a vacuum of stillness. The well-received but pathetically chopped-up version of "The Sleeping Beauty" with Margot Fonteyn was a case in point. All fluidity, the very element in which ballet prospers, was lost to piece-meal images of solo or small-group actions.

I do not think that the size of the screen is going to solve this problem for ballet or for any other activity requiring commodious spatial arrangements. Or, to put it differently, I don't think the solution will come in terms of "live" television. Contrary to Mr. Seldes' hopes, I suspect that whatever improvements may come will stem from the experience and with the assistance of cinematographic techniques and thus take the televised ballet, for example, further into the realm of film and away from the immediate and direct translation of reality we would like to think television's true métier. The controversy in the trade between filmed and "live" shows, at least in the naive form it has taken (for example: Jackie Gleason "live" in a drab little skit versus Jackie Gleason filmed in a drab little skit) leaves me baffled. It is as peripheral to the real issues television poses as a medium as were the turn-of-the-century discussions about the *life* of the

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theater versus the *imitation* of life of the cinema. The margin for spontaneity allowed by an assembly-line script fortified by a battery of cranes, dollys and cameras that are television equipment rather than motion picture equipment is something I leave to the experts in *Variety* to elucidate.

What can be said, and with some emphasis, is that up to this time the material that seems best to lend itself to effective and memorable communication on television is actuality. It does not seem to me entirely accidental that one of the few television plays which has come through with respectable dramatic impact was "A Night to Remember," in which the story of the SS *Titanic* was re-presented "live" by a cunning (and expensive) actuality technique. The *simulation* of the actual and the immediate created its emotional charge. Would the effect have been impaired if the play had been filmed? Some of the performers seem to think so. The actor who played the lax telegrapher told me that the fear of forgetting one's lines, or making a single slip in gesture or movement is so powerful that it forces a kind of do-or-die intensity not present when a shot can be taken and re-taken at will. But this is subjective testimony and as yet open to considerable disagreement. Why not more filmed programs if the quality is superior to live ones? In the realm of the arts the advantages seem persuasive, at least with the present technical limitations of television.

Meanwhile, what is left of that enrichment and extension of our knowledge that the great pioneers of television like Dr. Vladimir Zworykin saw as the true function of this as yet degraded medium? The tedious insistence in the trade on the "entertainment" function of television, as if it were a primal ordinance from above, is so infectious that even so-called "educational" television is smitten with a sense of guilt if it fails to entertain. Witness some of the more lugubrious efforts of *Omnibus* to make education "entertaining," as in its capsule tranquillizer, this autumn, on the state of the American university as represented by Harvard.

To answer my own question, what is left that is positive is a good deal but not enough. There

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are the actuality reports, the live or sometimes filmed news stories whose vividness and impact no television drama has yet matched. Who can forget the superb shots of the faces of Hungarian workers and students marching upon the Budapest radio station, the scenes of Russian tanks bearing down on groups of sullen boys and girls, or the clumsily bundled-up refugees carrying children and balancing their way over streams with Russian soldiers visible in the background? This summer there was the memorable view of the *Andrea Doria* turning on her great side and sinking into the sea. (One cannot but be reminded of the trite little "symbolic" ending of "A Night To Remember" and think how such film would have dignified the tragic story.) In the realm of thematic narrative documentary there was the sensitively conceived and beautifully filmed version of the sources of jazz, done with simple folk in the South who live with and create jazz. This came in the *Odyssey* series, an ambitious project in socio-cultural matters, executed with great unevenness in its weekly episodes and varying from glittering pseudo-documentary (as in the Virginia City installment) to the secure, unjazzed-up realism of the jazz story.

It is possible to say that in spite of the dull and unimaginative reports one has to sit through in order to come upon merit, television is functioning with some degree of responsibility in the area of news, public affairs and socio-cultural reporting. Even here, however, it has a long way to go in order to become a consistently rewarding product; even here the creeping palsy of the "entertainment" standard often depletes the power of large and tragic events. The intellectual content of all this is another matter. Such issues as where editorial lines can or should be drawn by the networks are matters of the gravest importance. Technical possibilities such as the use of cartoons, a potentially rich but absurdly costly procedure, the possible fusion of various forms such as music and narrative, these and a host of issues relating to kind, function, means and end are only now opening up for serious evaluation after almost a decade of prejudice, partisanship and nonsense.

Vivienne Koch

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THE BREAK-UP OF FAMILY CAPITALISM

The story of the rise and fall of social classes in Western society, as Pirenne and Schumpeter have pointed out, is that of the rise and fall of families. Without understanding that fact, as many American sociologists, accustomed to viewing class position in individualistic terms, have failed to do, one cannot understand the peculiar cohesiveness of dominant economic classes in the past, or the sources of the break-up of power in contemporary society today. A bold statement, perhaps, but one which the following sketch attempts to prove.

Capitalism is not only, as Marx saw it, an economic system with employer-worker relations and classes formed on strictly economic lines, but a social system wherein power has been transmitted through the family, and where the satisfactions of ownership lay, in part, in the family name by which the business enterprise was known.[1] The social organization of the family rested on two institutions: property and the "dynastic" marriage. Property, sanctioned by law and reinforced by the coercive power of the state, meant power; the "dynastic" marriage was a means of conserving, and through inheritance laws of transmitting property and so preserving, as the case might be, the continuity of the family enterprise.[2] Through the fusion of the two institutions, a class system was maintained: people met at the same social level, had similar educations, mingled in specific milieux—in short, created a distinctive style of life.

The singular fact is that in the last seventy-five years the old relation between the two institutions of property and family, which, Malthus maintained, represented the "fundamental laws" of society, has broken down. The specific reasons for this breakdown are too complex to describe here, but the process is clear. In bourgeois society, marriage was a means of keeping sex relations within

1 In Marcel Pagnol's *Fanny*, the ecstatic hope of Panisse is to add the words "and Son" over the door of his shop, a practice long maintained by commercial enterprises.

2 A classic instance of this process, perhaps, was the assumption by Gustav von Bohlen of the family name of Krupp, when the line lacked male heirs.

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bounds; in bourgeois marriage, as Denis de Rougemont wittily observed, every woman had a husband and desired a lover; the great Continental novels of the nineteenth century, Tolstoy's *Anna Karenina,* Flaubert's *Madame Bovary,* with their geometry of adultery, pointed up this paradox. The growth of romanticism, the high premium on individual attachment and free choice, the translation of passion into secular and carnal terms—all worked against the system of "dynastic" marriage. The emancipation of women meant, in one sense, the disappearance of one of the stable aspects of bourgeois society. If women could marry freely, crossing class lines if they so desired, then the economic enterprise with which the "dynastic" marriage was intertwined would lose some of its staying power.

But there are also reasons more indigenous to the nature of the economic system for the mode of family capitalism having given way. Some are general: the decline of the extended family or clan narrowed the choice of heirs competent to manage the enterprise; the increasing importance of professional techniques placed a high premium on skill rather than blood relationships. In the United States one can point to even more specific factors. The break-up of family capitalism came, roughly, around the turn of the century, when American industry, having over-extended itself, underwent a succession of crises. At this point, the bankers, with their control of the money and credit market, stepped in and reorganized and took control of many of the country's leading enterprises. The great mergers at the turn of the century, typified by the formation of United States Steel, marked the emergence of "finance capitalism" in this country.

By their intervention, the investment bankers, in effect, tore up the social roots of the capitalist order. By installing professional managers—with no proprietary stakes in the enterprise, therefore unable to pass along their power automatically to their sons, and accountable to outside controllers—the bankers effected a radical separation of property and family. The "young men from the provinces," passing through the classrooms of the Harvard Business School, now had an avenue by which to ascend to high social as well as economic

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positions. In time, however, the power of the bankers, too, declined as the managers became able, especially in the last twenty years, to detach themselves from financial controls, and win independent power in their enterprises. In some cases they were able to do this because they, the corporate organizers, were strong individuals; even more important was the enforced separation, by the New Deal measures, of investment and banking functions, which limited the investment bankers' control of the money market; but most important of all, perhaps, was the fact that the tremendous growth of American corporations enabled them to finance their expansion from their own profits rather than by borrowing on the money market.

The breakdown of family capitalism may explain, in part, the "dynamic" nature of modern American capitalism, for the establishment of independent managerial controls has produced a new impetus and new incentives. Unable to withdraw enormous sums of wealth from their corporations, as, say, Andrew Carnegie did from his steel company, the chief status drives of the managers have been performance and growth. Such aims, combined with the changed tax laws, have stimulated a high and constant degree of reinvestment of profits. Whereas only 30 per cent of corporate profits in 1929 were reinvested, about 70 per cent of corporate profits in the postwar years were plowed back for expansion.

The fact that the new managers have lacked a class position buttressed by tradition has given rise to a need on their part for an ideology to justify their power and prestige. In no other capitalist order, as in the American, has this drive for an ideology been pressed so compulsively. In other orders it was less needed. Private property was always linked, philosophically, to a system of natural rights; thus, property itself provided a moral justification. But private productive property, especially in the U.S., is largely a fiction, and rarely

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does one hear it invoked any longer as the moral source of the corporate executive's power. As we have had in the corporation the classic shift from ownership to managerial control, so, on the symbolic level, we have the shift from "private property" to "enterprise" as the justification of power. And, as with any ideology, the symbol itself sometimes becomes a propelling force, and "performance" for its own sake has become a driving motive of the American corporate head.

Sociologically, the break-up of family capitalism is linked to a series of shifts in power in Western society as a whole. No longer are there America's "Sixty Families" (or even France's "Two Hundred"). Family capitalism meant social and political as well as economic dominance: the leading family used to live in the "house on the hill." It does so no longer. Many middle-sized enterprises are still family owned, with son succeeding father (e.g., breweries), and many towns, like St. Louis and Cincinnati, still reveal the marks of the old dominance by families, but by and large the system of family control is finished. So much so that a classic study of American life like R. S. Lynd's *Middletown in Transition,* with its picture of the "X" family dominating the town, has in less than twenty years become completely outmoded.

Two "silent" revolutions in the relations between power and class position in modern society seem to be in process. One is a change in the *mode of access* to power insofar as inheritance alone is no longer all-determining; the other is a change in the *nature of power-holding itself* insofar as technical skill rather than property, and political position rather than wealth, have become the basis on which power is wielded.

The two "revolutions" proceed simultaneously. The chief consequence, politically, is the break-up of the "ruling class." A ruling class may be defined as a power-holding group which has both an established *community* of interest, and a *continuity* of interest. In effect, there is an "upper class" and a "ruling group." Being a member of the "upper class" (i.e., having differential privileges, and being able to pass those privileges along to one's designees) no longer means that one is a member of the ruling group, for rule is now based on other than the traditional criteria of property; the modern ruling groups are essentially coalitions, and the means of passing on the power they possess, or the institutionalization of any specific modes of access to power (the political route, or military advancement) is not yet fully demarked and established.

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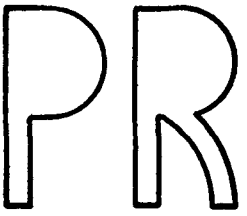

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